

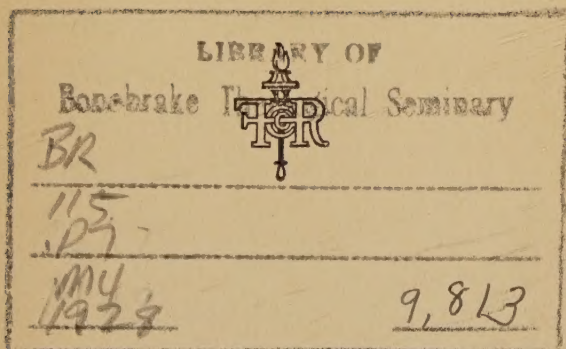
Bowing The Preacher Out of Politics

GEORGE MECKLENBURG

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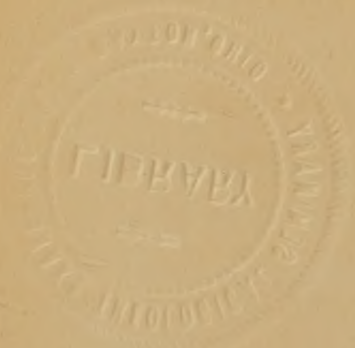
Bowing the Preacher Out of Politics

By
GEORGE MECKLENBURG, D.D.



NEW YORK CHICAGO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 851 Cass Street
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 99 George Street

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I

INTRODUCTION

SECULAR dogma dictates the message of the preacher! The all-year indoor sport of liberals and realists is to bow the prophet off the stage of surging, throbbing, jazz life. With the hot fervency of patriotism it is argued that the pulpit message must be confined to heaven and the Old Testament. The simple Gospel has become the concern of those who defy God and religion.

What means this ado about the message of modern ministers? Is it a genuine concern for the welfare of the Church? Or, can it be that our democracy is such a tender plant that the sturdy message of the preacher-prophets would crush it?

Further, what do we mean today when we say the Church should stay out of politics? Do we mean that the Church should refrain from dictation to its members on purely party questions, or do we mean that the Church must not be an organized leader of righteousness? Or, is it clever propaganda of liberals who desire a wide open world for sin and pleasure? Is it to intimidate the ministry and confine the pulpit message to abstract theology and academic questions for which few care these very practical and intensive days?

My concern and my point of view in this discussion is the "Main Street" church of America. Pastors and people are perplexed. On the one hand is the dignity

of the Church, the spiritual effectiveness of its services. Does not political propaganda, even for the very best causes, hurt the sacredness of the sanctuary? Is not politics too dirty to mix with chimes and heavenly anthems?

On the other hand, we know that the corruptionists in politics fear not the Church that sticks to the altars and knows not what is going on in the ward across the alley. So long as the chief effort is the beautiful homiletic sermon and the prayer-meeting service, then vice and corruption feel safe. It is only when the Church strikes out with righteous indignation of a holy prophet against definite sin and vice that there is consternation in the camp of those who corrupt the very heart of democracy. A study of the activity of the Church during the past nineteen centuries convinces me that the Church has been strong and achieving only during the periods when active interest was taken in the life of the people and of the nation. Freedom for the individual and a democratic form of Government would never have been achieved except for a politically active Church.

The whole question of temperance reform and prohibition also enters into this question. The Church certainly was the spiritual force behind prohibition. Now it seems the Church has yet to make prohibition a permanent and settled fact in American life. How can it accomplish this in a dignified way and do it effectively without seeming to meddle in the affairs of the Government? Is prohibition agitation an interference with state affairs? The whole philosophy of the relation of Church and state needs restatement from a practical rather than from a philosophical or political point of view.

I believe there is light for those who seek it. The Christian centuries of achieving spirituality must not be overlooked in our eager scanning into the future. Have we not badly overworked the idea that our times are so utterly different from all other ages, that all the methods of the past must be scrapped, that the ancients have nothing to tell us moderns? Fundamentally, spiritually, there is slight difference between the tenth century, B. C., and the twentieth century, A. D. Isaiah's methods might be taken more seriously by those who are safe behind stained glass windows. Jesus' "way" might be literally walked to advantage by those who seek the simple Gospel. The ecclesiastics of the Christian centuries who battered down the strongholds of political paganism might have some light for us. Even the New England statesman-preacher who hammered democracy into our Government might help us, if we would let him.

So let us see about it.

II

BOWING THE PREACHER OUT OF POLITICS

A cultured New England woman complains bitterly of her church and her religion as follows:

"Suave mannered, pleasant voiced, endangering nothing in particular, an ornament of the Sunday pew, devoted to good causes in proportion to their remoteness, intent upon promoting safe philanthropies, but as far as affairs of the world are concerned, ignorant alike of the ardours of the mystic or the heroism of the reformer; cheerfully assuming that whatever is innocently agreeable is religious, a domestic religion calculated to make life pleasant in the family circle and curiously at ease in Zion."—BERNARD I. BELL in Atlantic Monthly.

IT was at a round table luncheon in a business men's club. A dozen leaders of industry and business were present. They were in the habit of meeting at this table. There was a merchant prince, a near capitalist, a real estate dealer, a tobacco manufacturer, a doctor and a lawyer, and several coming executives. It was a rather fashionable and exclusive club. Success was the atmosphere and the point of view. The usual conversation covered such topics as golf, the races, the prize fights, and the league games. But this day for some reason they were discussing the preacher and the Church. Even golf becomes monotonous, when talked about every day. They conversed with personal unconcern about the dwindling influence of the Church, the loss in Church attendance, the uninter-

esting sermons and the tedious opening service. Only when the practical activity of the Church in coal strikes, prohibition, and social matters in general was broached, did they become warmly interested. This political meddling of the Church was condemned. The whole discussion was on a plane of that which one hears in current magazine articles on the Church and Christianity.

Then the capitalist, a ponderous and dignified man of very ordinary intelligence, spoke up. He had been silent, until this time. He was always expected to speak. He usually had the final word on every vital question. He was held in reverence by all in this group of up-to-the-minute successful Americans, for he controlled many, many interests. These men usually felt that superior wisdom was being uttered, when he delivered his mind of the best business orthodoxy of the day. He said slowly and with the authority of a judge on the bench, "I believe in the Church. I hold the minister in high regard. Our Republic is in danger when the Church loses grip. I deplore the loss in Church attendance, but I insist that the minister stick to the simple Gospel. All this modern tendency which makes the pulpit a lecture forum is dangerous to our democracy. My minister is a good little fellow. I like to hear him pray, but what does he know about finance and labour disputes and party politics? He would make a mess of it. Besides, when I go to church I want to forget about this sordid business world. I go to church to be spiritually inspired. I want my pastor to point out the way to eternal life. We practical business men know how to take care of the affairs of the world. I say again, I want the Church to stick to the simple Gospel."

It seemed to this group as though unanswerable and eternal truth was spoken and no reply seemed possible. This day, however, a new face appeared at the table. A stranger had been invited. He had not taken part in the discussion. Now it seemed as though he must say something. He had a serious and rather troubled look upon his face. He was asked to speak his mind, and he said, "I have greatly enjoyed your discussion. It is the sign of a new day, when groups like this discuss religion and life, as you have done." Then turning to the capitalist he said, "I am interested in your conclusions, but I am wondering what you mean by 'the simple Gospel'? Was not the simple Gospel in vogue when we were plunged into the World War? Is there any evidence that Jesus ever preached 'the simple Gospel'? Do you not mean a Gospel divorced from the heartaches and the needs of a disturbed and war-torn world? Would this not be an emasculated Gospel?"

The capitalist had to leave to make an appointment, but a new light and a new interest seemed to come into the faces of these prosperous executives. They sensed something that had not been heard in club circles. The young corporation lawyer, who had been silent until now, looked up quizzically at the stranger and said, "Perhaps the problem of the Church is not so simple as we have been thinking; perhaps 'the simple Gospel' is not simple."

The stranger was urged by this spiritually hungry group to speak on and to explain what he had in mind. With deep conviction and reserve he said:

"You have bowed the preacher out of politics. You have bowed him out of life. You think him a convenience

at funerals and weddings. You want him to pray. And yet you expect him to fill the pew, to stop all crime, to keep the young people true to the old orthodoxies that you yourselves are not living, to keep the world out of war and finally to land you safely in heaven. You have bowed your preacher out of works of benevolence. You turned that over to organized charities. You bowed him out of brotherhood work. The lodge and the luncheon club attends to that. You told him that boys' and girls' work could better be done by expert agencies set up for that purpose. The entertainment and the amusement of the people have become a highly organized business and is terribly commercialized. Even the social life of the community has scant Church connections. Life insurance and accident insurance have made life so safe that there is no longer any great crisis for the Church to bridge over. The moving-picture and the radio have pre-empted the evenings of the week. You have bowed the preacher out of the prayer-meeting. The evening service is a heart-breaker. You never attend either.

"Then you insist that the preacher stick to the simple Gospel. You insist on a conservative pulpit. You have made his message timid, insipid, safe, and worthless. You have allowed the Church to yield by degrees one position after the other to secularism, and now you demand that the Church stay out of local, national, and international politics. Then you wonder why church pews are empty and why the young people do not attend and why the Church has little influence. Practically the only unchallenged time left in the whole week for the Church is from eleven to twelve o'clock Sunday morning. Now the Sunday papers and the radio are making inroads on the sanctity of that hour, too.

"Do you see, gentlemen, the Church has not enough rooting left in life to live. You talk about the simple Gospel. You certainly do not mean that you want the Gospel of the Man who was crucified for His preaching. You do

not want the Gospel which calls for a new heaven and a new earth."

No man had more fervent listeners than this stranger. One by one they slipped out from the club building to take hold of the throttles of a terribly busy city. These men are the leaders of the most virile civilization of history. They are keen in mind, on the surface materialistic, but deep down they are spiritually hungry. They are the hope of America. The prevailing mood of that little group going out into the world was, "Well, the problem of the Church is not so simple."

The problem of what to preach and how to preach and the relation of the Church to the State is facing church boards and earnest pastors the world over. Shall the preacher listen to the click of the cash in the collection plate? Shall he court the favour of newspapers and give them nice innocuous copy? Shall he champion with fake heroism the popular side of the questions of the day? Shall he deal in words and harmless platitudes rather than in dynamic ideas? Or, shall he forget his own welfare and become a fearless prophet of righteousness? Shall he stand out ahead of his time in moral reform? Shall he measure every public question with the rod-stick of the Gospel of God? Shall the modern preacher fearlessly denounce corruption in office as well as social vice and injustice man to man? Shall he talk politics in the pulpit, or shall he be fearful to enter even the boundaries between the Gospel and politics? Shall he practice his sermons for smoothness so that no one be hit or hurt?

What is the duty of the prophet of God? Here is a man who knows the slums. Shall he pick up individ-

uals and save some, one by one, and say nothing about the system that produced living conditions like that? Must he fall in with builders "rings" or selfish unions and the dirty work of municipal contracts so that he can have money to run his church? This is certainly not an academic question. Every church and every pastor is "head on" with this question.

There is, in the first place, the question of the preacher's own life. If he is the right kind of a minister he feels himself an ambassador of God, not for a small section of life, but for all life. Yet the world is now trying to crowd him out of whole areas of life. He feels his influence waning. Pews are empty. Power and influence are gone. He is beginning to wonder whether he can be in true line with the prophets of old and take only a timid and academic attitude toward the political and social evils around him. Can he preach with power and fire so that this jazz-jaded world will come to attention and hear and be saved by talking only of the politics of Moses and of Isaiah and of the sins of Nebuchadnezzar? Can he hold a modern picture-show crowd by denouncing the political treachery of the Babylonians, when his wise twentieth century listeners know that there are as great national sins and scandals in high places today? If it is right to talk about the sins and the corrupt politics of Samaria, why is it wrong to denounce political corruption in our large cities?

Then the Church is commissioned with the very practical worldly task of bringing the Kingdom of God to this earth. Most churches now feel that we have a mission to make this world a good world to live in. This must be made God's world. Everything that destroys personality must be rooted out. This must

be made a safe place in which to develop disciples of Christ. To be sure, we start out by preaching Christ to the individual. We save souls. We inculcate great moral principles. We believe in personal salvation and righteousness as fundamental to good conditions in the community and in the nation. We practiced this kind of Gospel preaching for many generations, and now we find that the Kingdom of God is scarcely nearer at hand. We found that the liquor traffic, for instance, was destroying more people than we could save. We thought we had produced a pretty good world civilization. We saw Christianity spreading in a world-wide way. Then all of a sudden the World War broke out and we witnessed a hundred years' backset in world life. Now we are beginning to wonder whether we should not have given more attention as a Church to the saving of nations. We go to the mission fields and teach brotherhood for a whole generation. We think we have accomplished something. Then a treaty broken by a hasty midnight session of Congress discredits the work of ten thousand missionaries.

Then our concern, also, ought to be for the welfare of the State. There is a growing belief on the part of social workers in all lands that a more just order of society can be secured only through the State. Therefore, the Church, which is a custodian of religion and a teacher of moral principles, cannot ignore the State. The State is as subject to sin and corruption as the individual. The State needs the preaching of the pulpit, the rebuke of the prophet the inspiration of the minister of God, the vision of the sky pilot. Shackle the voice of the preacher and I fear for the morals and the very life of the State.

I think this is what Calvin Coolidge had in mind in his *The Price of Freedom*:

“It is altogether natural that those who are connected with religious institutions should be interested in supporting good government. Their interest comes not merely from the ethical teachings of their faith, which are always finally on the side of liberty and justice, established through the maintenance of the orderly processes of the law, which is pre-eminently true of our American political system. It claims no justification for its existence save righteousness. It had its beginning, it found its inspiration in the religious beliefs of the men who settled our country, made it an independent nation, and established and maintained its Constitution and its laws. If it is to endure, it will be through the support of men of like mind and like character.”

Therefore, many leading Christians are beginning to wonder whether the Kingdom of God can be instituted without a practical concern about politics. Are we even ready to admit a complete separation of economic, political, and personal conduct? Can we even conceive of life so sharply divided into the temporal and the spiritual? We find also that, until this last century, no one dreamed of a sharp separation of the Church from active guidance in and participation with world life.

It may also be that our day needs adjustments in some of our fundamental assumptions regarding Church and State. We have, for instance, assumed more or less that the economic world was “self-adjusting, automatic and self-sufficient” apart from the moral teachings of justice and righteousness. Now we are not so cock-sure about that. Likewise, we have assumed that the State is an absolute sovereign, perfect in itself, independent of morals and the inspiration and

guidance of religion. Now we are beginning to see the terrible fallacy of that assumption.

May it not also be true that we have only gone part way in democracy, that a full democracy would allow the free play of all organizations, whether civic or religious, upon Government? Why not let the Church exert in a democratic way her spiritual function to convert the State to national and international righteousness?

Studdert Kennedy has made the suggestion that we have no right to blame the Church, when the world goes wrong and at the same time to curse it, when it tries to lead the world right. If moral principles must lie at the basis of clean politics, then why keep religion out? If, on the other hand, moral principles have no place in Government, then we must go on in the dreary outlook of injustice, corruption, and world wars.

III

THE POLITICS OF THE PROPHETS

"The Old Testament from Pentateuch to the Prophets was a book of politics. The books of Moses were law books; Genesis was the history leading up to the founding of a nation; Exodus was a patriotic story of the founding of a nation; Leviticus was a law book both for the nation and the Church; Numbers is a story of a national census and a division of the tribes; Deuteronomy was a revision and codification of the national law.

*"The next great division of the Hebrew Bible was the Prophets. The prophets were reformers, preachers of civic righteousness who mixed into everything, rebuked kings, reformed abuses, regenerated society, preached civic virtue; and the Christian ministry of the twentieth century is not the successor of the priesthood, but of the prophets, apostles and evangelists, who took a hand in every moral struggle, 'turned the world upside down,' hurled conviction like forked lightning at Ahab; faced the ire of Jezebel; told David 'Thou art the man,' warned Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife,' made Felix tremble on his throne as Paul, a humble prisoner, reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come."—DR. CLARENCE TRUE WILSON in *The Methodist Review*.*

LOOKING at the Old Testament as a whole and from somewhat a different point of view, we may say that the Old Testament is an encyclopædia of great reforms. Abraham brought about great reform in religion when he renounced the many gods of his country and walked out under the stars alone "to serve the one living and true God henceforth," and to

become the father of all the faithful until Monotheism was established in the earth. Then came the great reform under Moses, who freed a multitude of slaves, trained them in law and government and religion and built them into a nation. He created the first democracy under republican form of government, which became the model of our fathers, when they wrote the principles of freedom into the Federal Constitution of the United States. Then came the time of the great social reformers, the prophets of Israel. They were teachers of righteousness and preachers of repentance. They rebuked personal and national sin. They defended the weak against the strong. They were critics of kings and insistently advocated the rights of the people. The underlying philosophy of the prophet was the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God.

More and more, socially minded preachers are finding the Old Testament, and particularly the prophetic literature, applicable to pressing social, industrial, and political problems of this twentieth century.

The major prophets of Israel were the "crowning glory of the Hebrew race." It is impossible to think of the high place of the Hebrews in history except for the prophetic literature. The grasp the prophets had on religion and national life is unique in all history. Contrary to what one may be led to think from the usual homiletical use of prophecy, the prophets were not preachers of individual salvation, but of national righteousness. The great prophet of God was at the same time a great statesman. To the prophet the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Israel were identical. They never could conceive of a righteous people in an unrighteous state. To save the nation from idolatry and sin was to save the people.

I am afraid that we have done a great deal of mental juggling about absolute separation of Church and State. We have said much in long sermons about the absolute need of saving the individual. We have said that when the individual was made right then we would not need to worry about social conditions. We have thought that good individuals would surely transform the politics of the world.

But I am afraid we have done too much shallow thinking on this question. The Kingdom of God, what is it? Can the Kingdom be established as a practical fact without taking into consideration human relations such as government and industry? What is the Kingdom of God on earth except conditions on earth, social, industrial, political, such as are pleasing to God? Can these conditions be brought about by preaching only a selfishly individual Gospel? Well, so far it has not. May it not be that in the long run the people will be what the industrial and political structure is? In building a really practical world evangelization program, may it not be well for us to read generous portions from the prophets?

In *The Prophet and His Problem*, J. M. P. Smith says, "The prophetic religion was kept in constant touch with the developing life of the nation. But the national life was continuously involved in the most intimate way with the mighty currents of the larger world life around it. Hence, religion was made in the full light of world history. It laid hold on the great world movements of the time and claimed them for God."

Dean Albert C. Knudson, in his splendid little book on the *Prophetic Movement and History*, contends that prophecy was primarily of a social and national

character. A redeemed nation or a Kingdom of God was the prophet's goal. So the prophetic movement, he says, was as much patriotic as religious.

Even the briefest and most uncritical study of prophecy as a mere boy led me to feel that the prophets were preachers, who meddled a whole lot in politics. Since then I have come to see that to think politics and to work for better politics may be a highly spiritual task. I have also come to see that a democracy needs the prophet's point of view. Just as industry easily becomes commercialized, so statescraft easily becomes materialistic, cruel and crushing.

I used to secretly admire Samuel, who way back in the eleventh century, B. C., when Israel was in danger of losing independence to the Philistines, went so far as to organize a monarchy and anoint a king, and to stir up the people to strike for freedom that the nation might be saved. The interests of religion and of politics were one and the same in Samuel's day. No one can read the story of the patriotism and heroism of Elijah and Elisha without wishing that we had today ten thousand preachers like them. So mighty were they in the political and religious life of the nation that they have been regarded ever since as the very bulwark of the Hebrew nation.

Who can read of the preaching of Amos without admiration? But what was Amos, if not political? His whole spiritual message was given in the seething political situation of Israel. "He put his finger on the sore spots of the body politic, and the land began to tremble."

Isaiah is, perhaps, the best example of the prophet-preacher of God concerned with national and international life. He lived at a momentous time. It was at

the cross-roads of history. Look down the way of the ninth century, B. C., and you see only Isaiah. It was just beginning to dawn on the people that God was a God of all nations. Up until this time even Israel thought of God as a national God. The political situation was intense and at times tragic. The Assyrian menace was the nightmare of the people of all the nations. Tiglat Pileaser not only conquered nation after nation, but he had gotten into the habit of carrying away whole populations. Entire races found themselves facing annihilation. The stories of Assyrian savagery were the talk of the village and the countryside. Ahaz was the king of Israel. The Jews were, of course, right in the centre of this great world fear. The king was courting favour with Assyria and sought for an unholy alliance with this beast. This was too much for Isaiah. It forced him right into the centre of the politics of the world. He opposed this alliance on religious as well as on political grounds.

Then for fifty years Isaiah stands out in the political history of Israel as the master mind and the great heart of the people. His political sermons summarize the sins of the nations to be, idolatry, militarism, impoverishment of the poor, bribery, and perversion of justice. He denounced these sins unmercifully. But the nation heeded not. When bad politics had finally done its worst and the nation had collapsed and was grovelling in gross darkness, then he becomes the great hero-patriot, who gathered up the remnants of the nation.

I do not see how Isaiah can ever be used to give encouragement to the cloistered, impractical, other-worldly, timid preacher. Nor does Isaiah or the other great prophets give encouragement to the modern ten-

dency towards sacerdotalism. No, the prophets were flaming world evangelists, preacher-statesmen who were ready to burn themselves out in the service of God and the nation.

And I come to a similar conclusion from a study of the great evangelist-prophet, Jeremiah. During his time the very existence of the nation was at stake. The professional politicians advocated military preparedness. The priests of the day were anxious for greater care in the methods of worshipping God. But Jeremiah, who saw with the clearness of an inspired prophet the sins of the people and the inner corruption of the Government, proclaimed from the housetops that nothing short of complete change of heart would save the nation. We can imagine the oratorical effect and the sting of his speech when he said, "As a cage is full of birds, so their houses are full of graft." It was a mightily effective evangelism that Jeremiah worked out of the terrible national conditions.

While the political services of the prophets are very impressive to me, their fearless social and industrial messages are equally great. The prophets had a penetrative and analytical insight into social sin that has never been improved on by modern social reformers. The oppressed today feel bitterly that the Church is on the side of the well-fed and prosperous. It seems to many that the pulpit is weak in defence of the down-trodden. The real truth, perhaps, is that the Church is so occupied with its own machinery that there is little time left even to alleviate destructive poverty. Not so with the prophets. They had no church budgets. They had no large salaries to raise. So Isaiah takes the liberty to cry out in his matchless oratory, "What mean ye that crush my people and grind the

face of the poor? Woe unto them that join house to house and lay field to field, until there is no place."

And so it was with utter disgust of the ruling classes that Micah could fling out to his great mass meetings, "Ye eat the flesh of my people and flay their skin from off them and break their bones." And so Amos with fearlessness denounced the rulers for selling the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes. One can easily imagine why Jeremiah was so often in jail, when one recalls some of the stinging paragraphs from his pulpit utterances that have come down to us through history, "Woe unto him that builds his house by unrighteousness, who employs his neighbour without pay and does not give him wages."

After we scan the ages of political history and search for vital political truth, we must say that some of the finest inspiration on human government came through the prophets. No religious teachers ever studied statesmanship so carefully. No leaders ever understood better the fundamentals of state welfare. No one ever had a more workable international laboratory. The unscrambling nations were all around them.

That the foundation of national security is spiritual we first find mentioned in prophetic literature. They preach to the nation with great effectiveness that the real safety of any nation is from within. Recently I heard the same thought expressed over the radio by our President. When the Egyptian alliances were being proposed Isaiah comes out flat-footed against all alliance with wicked nations. "The Egyptians are men and not God, and their horses flesh and not spirit."

In no other literature in the wide world do we find such high conception of the duty of a nation to righteousness and justice. Not only must the nations do

righteously to live, but the nation must insist that the individuals do the same. Amos insists that there can be no stable and lasting government, unless there be regard for justice man to man. "The nation that sins will die," was said so loudly and so repeatedly that the world will never quite forget it.

What finer or stronger world sentiment will ever be expressed on international peace? The prophets preach a superior pacifism that neither cringes nor shows yellow. They speak on this question on the higher plane of statesmanship to which the world must sooner or later come. "To beat your spears into plough-shares," has reverberated down the ages as the mightiest challenge ever made to militarism and organized brutality.

The prophets were political democrats. Absolute monarchy never thrived well, when the prophets were in supremacy. A ruler was always thought of as one chosen by God and the people. To the prophet sovereignty was always with the people. The democracies that sprang into being during the eighteenth century had a direct relationship to prophetic literature. The fathers of the American republic were steeped in Scripture. They knew the prophets. So they saw that justice and righteousness became the chief ends of government, and that no nation exist for itself but for the people.

The prophets also used the political situation for illustrative material for their spiritual sermons. As far as I know, they had no illustration books with ready-made anecdotes those days. If national disaster came, this was used as the basis of a challenge to the people to be free from sin. When the nation was pressed by enemies, the occasion was used to teach the

people that clean living would make them strong to resist the enemy. Some of the marvellous religious passages of Isaiah could never have come to us except from a great agonizing soul that suffered with a crucified people. The very theology and philosophy of the prophets were forged out of a terrible cauldron of disaster. No academic dreamer or mere easy pulpit orator could have flashed out the sentences that illuminate history and glow down to our day. The prophet never had any notion of avoiding public questions.

On the contrary, he thrust himself right into the midst of every momentous problem of the nation. He did this at great personal peril. The prophets were often imprisoned and killed. Prophecy was the most perilous profession of the Hebrews. Life insurance companies now say that the preacher is preferred risk. It may be when our preacher-prophets catch the fire of the ages of prophecy that the risk on preachers will not be so attractive.

IV

THE POLITICS OF JESUS

"In the year 6 Judea was annexed to Syria; the year 70 Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed. Between these two dates Jesus preached and was crucified on Golgotha. During all that time the life of the little nation was a terrible drama; its patriotic emotions were aroused to the highest pitch and then still more inflamed by the identification of national politics with a national religion. Is it reasonable to assume that what was going on before Jesus' eyes was a closed book, that the agonizing problems of His people were matters of indifference to Him, that He had given them no consideration, that He was not taking a definite attitude towards the great and all-absorbing problem of the very people whom He taught?"

"In this setting, the Jewish nationalist could not separate religion from patriotism. Roman taxation, for instance, is certainly a purely political question, but Judas made a religious issue of it; and the Pharisaic interrogator of Jesus asked whether it was 'lawful,' that is, religiously permissible. Jesus, therefore, could not meditate about the religious problems of the people, to whom He ministered without giving consideration to their engrossing political problem."—Toward the Understanding of Jesus, SIMKHOVITCH. (Quoted by permission of MacMillan Co.)

WHEN Jesus came to enter His ministry He spoke with a prophetic note and not with priestly formality. Nobody even thought He was one of the High Priests or one of the Common Priests, they said, "He is Elijah," "He is Isaiah," "He is Jeremiah or one of the old prophets." And Herod, hearing of His fame, inquired into His method of

denouncing sin and demanding reform of abuses, and said, "This is John the Baptist, he has risen from the dead." In other words, he thought Him the resurrected prophet and reformer who was willing to lose his head, but would not lower a standard or surrender a principle.

The social and political teachings of the Old Testament prophets make up much of the literary background of Jesus' teachings. That He came in the fullness of time must mean that it was a very disturbed time, that He came in the nick of time to save His people. As history measures time, He came just before the annihilation of the Jewish nation.

Who can understand Jesus? Were His teachings directed to the political situation of His times that were so all-absorbing to the people? Or, was Jesus other-worldly and "spiritual"? Was He thinking of the Jews or of the world down through the ages? Or, was He a healer of souls and a maker of parables who shunned social and political responsibility?

Or, is it true that Jesus was the great revolutionist of all time with dynamite enough in every sermon to blow up a hundred worlds? Is there any way that we can get at the real truth about Jesus? Let us look at a paragraph from a standard exposition which attempts to explain Jesus. This paragraph is orthodox, protestant, and safe. It reads as follows:

"It is perhaps of more importance to observe that in probably the most critical period of the world's history our Lord took no part in any political movement; nay, He counted it a temptation of the devil when He saw how much inducement there was to head some popular party and compete with kings or statesmen. He was no agitator, although

He lived in an age abounding in abuses. And this limitation of His work was due to no superficial view of social movements nor to any mere shrinking from the rougher work of life, but to His perception that His own task was to touch what was deepest in man, and to lodge in human nature forces which ultimately would achieve all that was desirable. The cry of the poor against the oppressor was never louder than in His lifetime; slavery was universal; no country on earth enjoyed a free Government.

“ Yet our Lord most carefully abstained from following in the steps of Judas the Gaulanite, and from intermeddling with social or state affairs. He came to found a kingdom, and that kingdom was to exist on earth, and was to be the ideal condition of mankind; but He trusted to move and mould society by regenerating the individual and by teaching men to seek in the first place not what ‘ the Gentiles seek ’—happy outward conditions—but the kingdom of God, the rule of God’s Spirit in the heart, and the righteousness that comes of that. It was by the regeneration of individuals society was to be regenerated. The heaven which contact with Him imparted to the individual would touch and purify the whole social fabric.”—*An Exposition of the Bible*, Vol. V.

This exposition is so beautiful and so largely true to the Gospel that one is disinclined to criticism. The particulars of the paragraph are true, but the purpose and the intention are misleading. It has something the same effect as some modern oratory we hear on Jesus. It is often worse than meaningless. After forty-five minutes of harmless preaching we warm up to the climax as follows: “ Jesus formulated no creed, but inspired men to think out their own creed. He prescribed no ritual, but provoked men to a new faith in God. He organized no church, but gave men such enthusiasm for humanity that they put a church at

every cross-roads. Christ projected no political movement, but He set men on fire with democracy."

And so on and so on. All this is true in a way, but is the greatest fallacy in application. This type of explaining Jesus is the laboured result of ages of "spiritualizing" and adapting the Gospel to unheroic, sinful human society. It is this kind of emasculated, explained, toned down Gospel which will allow social and labour conditions destructive of personality. It has taken the "bite" out of preaching. The Gospel has become safe, harmless, and comfortable in the midst of hellish conditions that stultify and spoil everything that Jesus stood for. We need today to see the real Jesus, the Jesus who preached and healed and argued with the patriot-politicians of Palestine.

We have seen how the prophets of the Jewish race always kept close to the politics of the day. They always tuned their pronouncements to the need of the nation. Indeed, only the prophetic messages born of terrible national crisis have come down to us with glow and power. No merely academic or philosophic prophecy would have stood the test of time. The sermons of the prophets that we now have are the patriots' agony striking across the skies of time. It is the searchlight of terror in the night. It was the great darkness of a nation going down in heathenism and despair that stirred up prophecy.

I believe recent students of the Gospel, such as Frank B. Cowgill and Vladimir G. Simkhovitch and many others have made good in their contention that Jesus was an ardent Jewish *patriot*; that He was a patriot-prophet with a plan for a religious awakening that would save the Jewish people from destruction; that Jesus' Gospel is this plan of salvation, that His

crucifixion came because this plan went counter to the Jewish politicians and religious super-patriots.

Let us take a deep and fresh though fleetingly brief look at the Gospel times and Jesus' part in them. A true historical background will also give us increasing religious values and delights in the Gospel. Many dark sayings will be clear, when we know the setting. Syria was a province of the Roman Empire, but the Jews were allowed some local autonomy, and had a king. The governor from Rome, however, was superior in authority. The Jews were divided into several political camps. Politics was the everyday topic in city and hamlet. The Pharisees made up a strong party of Jewish patriots. The Herodians, on the other hand, favoured the Roman rule, believing in this way the Jews could have some self-government. The common people, divided into many sects, were consumed with a great passion for self-rule and democracy. It was the intensest form of race-religious patriotism. And it was into this situation Jesus came. He was, undoubtedly, sensitive to every current of thought and feeling. Can it be possible He was not interested in the burning political questions of the day? Can it be true that His preaching was uninfluenced by the great terror in the heart of every listener?

Jesus was, I am convinced, a student of the political travail of the Jews and an ardent patriot. Every turn of His teachings and His thoughts leads me to this conclusion. His words were charged with concern for a desperate cause; His speech was dripping with the blood of His race. He was brought up in the very centre of Jewish history. In a few minutes He could climb to the crest of the hill at His Nazareth home and look into the great Megiddo Valley, in which the bat-

tles of the ages had been fought. The bones of His fathers were buried in this valley. Every acre of it was a call to high emotional patriotism and religious devotion. Even now as a boy He saw the glistening armour of the Roman legions as they marched on the highway of the nations. The theatre of world politics was there right before the eyes of the boy Jesus.

The home of Jesus must have vibrated with race patriotism. He heard the story of the achievements of the patriarchs and the prophets. He was drilled in the fundamentalism of the religion of Nazareth. The simple folk of His home were not so simple. They were seers and prophets themselves. The persecutions, the crucifixions along the highway, the constant affronts to Jewish self-respect, the dwindling self-government, the encroaching sin of Roman life, the futile resistance of the Zealots,—these were the subjects of the hectic and strained conversations that Jesus heard in His boyhood. And these doings were being interpreted. The more far-seeing could see nothing but destruction ahead for Israel. The Roman power seemed impregnable. The hot-headed Zealots and the imponderable Pharisees would never know how to handle the political situation. Doom and only doom faced the Jews along the lines of physical resistance. The intensely religious and quietly pious neighbours of Jesus perceived all this more or less clearly. They talked about it. They prayed about it. It seemed that only God could save them. The Messiah must come now or it would be too late. Jesus grew up in wisdom and stature and treasured in His heart all this that He heard every day at Nazareth. It was the fulness of time, it was the place and the age to train a world Saviour.

They, who could see beneath the surface of the dis-

turbed waters, saw one desperate national situation. The race with all its wonderful religious heritage faced annihilation. All around them they saw the paganizing of life. Greek families were moving into every fourth house. The young people were being contaminated with the amusements of the world. Religion was becoming formalized. The synagogues were being neglected. Taxation was becoming so high that the common people were scarcely more than slaves. Everything that happened in the news of the day served to fan smouldering race hatreds. Emotional and fanatical religious revivals were the excitement of the day. False prophets were toying with the hopes and fears and credulities of the people. A revolt of the populace might happen at the slightest provocation. And a general revolt would mean total destruction. So the common people, the people with whom Jesus lived, were "politically desperate and religiously fanatical."

"Desperate was the external conditions, desperate the inner pain of souls searching for a way out. Thus all hope and aspiration was centred in the coming of Christ, whose mission is so wonderfully expressed in Luke: 'To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet unto the way of peace.'"—*Toward the Understanding of Jesus*, p. 36.

That Jesus shared this great national fear and that He saw the coming doom is clear from the Scripture: "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, that there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down" (Matthew 24:2.)

That Jesus firmly believed in the impending disaster to the nation unless something drastic was done about it, can certainly be proven to anyone who reads a para-

graph from one of His sermons as related in the thirteenth chapter of Mark: "But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand) let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains: And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house; And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect."

The preaching that Jesus listened to was certainly often of the kind that John the Baptist thundered out in mighty volcanic eruptions. The true prophets, like the prophets of old, were trying to tell the despairing villagers that the only way out was spiritual. They said that the axe is at the root of the tree. Doom is imminent. But repentance and a new spirit, being born again, will save us.

To say that the lost house of Israel did not concern Jesus; to argue that the political despair of His people did not enter into His plan of salvation; to think of Him as one who dealt only in universals is at once to

deny His humanity and His divinity. God has always worked through particular historical situations. The Gospel of Jesus did become the Gospel of salvation to all men for all ages because it was eternal and universal, but the plan proposed by Jesus was for His own people to meet a definite political situation in Palestine in the beginning of the first century.

It was only after many years of very intense meditation, after utter personal abandonment of ambition, and after considering all the alternatives as they presented themselves on the Mount of Temptation that Jesus emerged with a plan of salvation for His race. This plan was so much a part of Himself that He could say in very truth that He Himself was the "way" and the solution of the situation. The solution of Christ was so radically different from that proposed by any political party that it was bound to be rejected of men.

The Jews had a way of their own. They had been trained for many centuries to look for a Messiah as the only national deliverer. The sacred literature of the Jews taught plainly that the chief purpose of the Messiah was to deliver the people from political oppression and to restore the religion of the fathers. The theological interpretations in vogue during Jesus' day centred chiefly around the return of the Messiah, how he was to come and when.

Jesus fought this materialistic and national conception of the Messiah. He tried to enlarge their conceptions of what a real Saviour would do for them in the world. But He never convinced the people that the Christ must bring peace and not war. The real heart of the rejection of Jesus was at this point. They would not accept a Messiah except one who would go

out and organize a military revolt against the Roman oppression.

These were the political, social, and religious conditions when Jesus came to His ministry. The people were naturally high and haughty, intensely religious, and had ages of practice and tradition in self-government. They yearned for democracy and a chance to express themselves in their own government. But now they were crushed, humiliated, sitting in gross darkness. They were hopelessly divided. The Pharisees hated the Romans, but dickered with them for petty liberties. The Zealots were ready for open rebellion at any time. The ordinary well-meaning religious people knew not what to think. They were eagerly watching the signs of the times for a Deliverer. It was the great moment of history.

Jesus stands before the multitude at the Sea of Galilee. He is about to give His first sermon. It is a nervously expectant multitude before Him. What will He say to them? What plan of salvation will He propose?

Jesus came forth with the clearest program of national and international salvation that the world has ever known. That which He proclaimed there particularly for Israel was so fundamentally true and eternal that it is the only hope today to despairing nations. He chose the way of inner regeneration and spiritual rebirth as the only way to save the Jewish nation. He proposed non-resistance as the only way to conquer the armies of Rome. He proposed that they live so humbly and so gloriously and so happily close to God that the Roman oppression would seem insignificant. The Sermon on the Mount is the program of Jesus to save a nation. We have diluted it and made its teach-

ing mean nothing for this despairing world. And today this same Gospel needs to be proclaimed from the housetops of the nations. To save us from perishing with the sword the preachers of Christianity need to proclaim this as the only solution of impending international calamities. The way of Jesus must be proclaimed in a new and fresh way to give heart to the poor crushed people of this earth. Never since Jesus' time was His Gospel more needed than just now.

But the proposal of Jesus was rejected. They could see nothing to non-resistance, though Jesus made it clear that those who take to the sword shall perish with the sword. It had no meaning to them. He pleased no party. No sect of the day would adopt it. He could not become a political Messiah. He knew that utter ruin of the nation lay along that way of procedure. The spiritual way of national redemption they could not understand. This total misunderstanding of the motives and purposes of Christ was His real crucifixion. Almost in impatience He cried out one day, "Ye hypocrites, ye discern the face of the sky and of the earth: But how is it that you do not discern this time?"

So the doom of Israel was inevitable. Jesus saw it as a political certainty. He made the prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem so clearly that every detail came true. In the year 70 Jerusalem was destroyed. One of the most horrible slaughters of history took place. The Jews were scattered. The Jewish nation was destroyed forever.

"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me," said Jesus to the women at the cross, "but weep for yourselves and your children. For behold the days are coming, in which they shall say: Blessed are the bar-

ren. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, fall on us and to the hills, cover us."

Not only was Jesus' plan of national salvation rejected, Jesus Himself was rejected. The Romans could see nothing but rebellion resulting from a great religious awakening. The Jews, on the other hand, could see nothing to this "kingdom within us" talk but a passive giving in to the terrible dominance of Roman power. Even the Essenes, the most religious sect of Jesus' day and the most appreciative of Him, could see no practical hope in non-resistance as a national policy. And we must be charitable, for we have hardly today risen up to this part of Jesus' teachings.

The party in control planned the crucifixion of Jesus not for doctrinal reasons. There was in that day great religious tolerance because the political situation overshadowed everything. The Jews sought the crucifixion of Jesus, because they believed that His preaching would win the people to non-resistance and to submission to Rome. Jesus went to the Cross crucified by the religious patriots of Jerusalem right at the brink of ruin of the most religious and democratic and prophetic nation of all times.

V

FROM ST. PAUL TO JOHN WESLEY

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the powers? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."—
ROMANS 13:1-4.

THE divine right of kings is said to have originated from this political message of St. Paul to the Romans. I believe, however, that he had no such far-reaching political philosophy in mind. He was simply giving political advice to his converts. It is a bit of characteristic Pauline missionary strategy. Christians had misused the doctrine of liberty in Christ. The missionary stations organized by Paul were getting into useless and fruitless difficulties with the civil authorities. So he simply tells them that a Christian does not cease to be a citizen. A Christian must still be loyal to his Government. Though Nero may be a tyrannical beast, he ought to be obeyed. Though the Roman Empire is selfish and monarchical, it works for good in the long run. Government is a terror to evil and a help to the good. In other words, civil govern-

ment, even with a Nero at its head, is a divine thing. No government would be anarchy.

I believe this was all that Paul had in mind. He was certainly not, in this letter, passing on the rightness or the wrongness of monarchical tyranny. He was not presuming to guide the political philosophy of the Christian ages. He was writing as a Roman citizen for a particular and delicate political situation. He is a practical preacher who knows his day well and gives the best political advice.

However, this Scripture has been seized with avidity by commentators down the many Christian generations. Its influence on the politics of the world has been beyond estimation. From this bit of Scripture it has been argued that government as such is sacred. Government is set up by God Himself. The king has his rights to rule from God rather than from the people. The people must obey, be the king good or bad. Civil government must not be touched or discussed by ordinary folks.

This unwarranted use of St. Paul's temporary missionary strategy is one of the major literary travesties. It is just the opposite of the meaning and trend of St. Paul's preaching and teaching. St. Paul bids every man to stand face to face with Christ and God, knowing no final authority except eternal truth in Jesus. As we know it today His doctrines have developed the sturdiest kind of individualism, and have made men independent of political situations and outward circumstances. The doctrines of Paul have enabled men to die in the face of persecution and to defy political tyranny of every sort and kind. Down to and through the Middle Ages it was always the Christian who stood up alone to protest against injustice and political

tyranny. Christianity has been the terror of political evil and has given the courage of many peoples to strike for freedom. The early Church fathers would never think of submitting to social or political unrighteousness to save themselves or the Church. Thomas Aquinas, when commenting on St. Paul's conception of the sacredness of government, gives us a rather intimate glimpse into the current estimation and interpretation of this Scripture. After quoting Romans xiii, he says that a tyrannical government is not just nor sacred, because it is not directed to the common good but to the private good of the ruler. Consequently, he argues, there is no sedition in resisting a government of this kind. Indeed, he claims that the tyrant is rather the one who is guilty of sedition.

A. J. Carlyle points out that, during the time between Gregory the Great and the political writers of the Middle Ages, the theologians had gradually come to hold the view that the authority of the State is derived from the people and not from God directly. From this they logically came to see that the ruler is answerable directly to the people.

St. Ambrose insists that it is justice that builds up a State and injustice which destroys it. Much in the same way St. Isidore of Seville says that the king holds his name only so long as he does righteousness. He loses it when he does wrong. The writers of the ninth century have a great deal to say about the chief function of the king being to maintain righteousness. The leading lights among the theologians were beginning to see that government is merely an organization of human beings for human welfare and that rulers are set up for the purpose of serving the people. This thought, of course, was not new, as we pointed out in

the chapter on the prophets. The theologians were merely getting the Old Testament point of view.

But in spite of the protests of Christian theologians, the deification of the State has been the besetting sin of the Christian centuries. When the individual is down and when persons are chattel, then the State is worshipped. When human beings are dust, then the State is divine. To pagan philosophy the individual hardly existed. Therefore, the greatest check to the deification of a State has been Christianity. The teaching of the equality of human nature and the capacity of all men for the highest life are among the great contributions of Christianity to modern civilization. Unlimited monarchy was never quite comfortable under a fresh and virile teaching of Christianity. Paul said the word that spoiled the divine rights of kings. "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, for ye are all one in Christ."

But in spite of all this the deification of the State persisted in one form or other down to the present time. I notice that some political philosophers today attribute the World War to just this aggrandizement of the State. William Temple, in his *Essays on Christian Politics*, has this to say:

"This question whether or not the national State is its own ultimate end was the most fundamental issue at stake in the war of 1914-1918, but the fact was not universally recognized. The German Government appeared, at least, to accept the complete sovereignty of the national State as the basis of its policy. Moreover, many great German writers had openly advocated the doctrine that the essence of the State is Power (*Macht*), and that self-realization of the fulfilment of destiny is for a State merely the development of its power. This is sheer Machiavellianism; and when

confronted with it in a naked and unmitigated assertion, the conscience of humanity revolted at it. But in repudiating this doctrine men committed themselves to the position that the State is not its own sole end, but exists to serve something beyond itself—which must be either the Society of Nations or the Kingdom of God.”

The World War with all its devastation ought to have been a knockout blow forever to super nations. It ought to have taught us forever the folly of the worship of national power. But I am afraid the world learns political lessons slowly. Even in our own land today this question is not dead. Could we but see deeply enough into our social structure, we might recognize this as one of the major religious and political questions. The violent demand today that the Church let politics alone sounds like old times to one who has steeped himself in the political history of the Middle Ages. The coarse pseudo-patriotism of “my country right or wrong” is only one indication of the general tendency towards a sort of secular deification of the State.

Christian patriotism ought now to make us tremendously concerned for the right attitude towards Government. A concern for a nationalism that is international and free, and a deep regard for the rights of free men should be one of the major preaching themes of the Christian ministry.

It is, of course, difficult to give a correct view of the activities of the Church and the politics of the Christian centuries within the scope of one brief chapter. We must assume, of course, that it is generally known that the idea of strict separation of Church and State is of late origin. The Church concerned herself in-

tensively with the welfare of government for many centuries. Sometimes the Church had real civil power, and sometimes this power was misused. But the line between Church and State was so indistinct that it is sometimes difficult to say whether it was Church corruption or State corruption. At our distance in historical perspective it is easy to become discouraged with the slow progress of political reform during the Christian centuries.

But we must remember that the Church finally accomplished that which the State could not do. The State was unable to eject the paganism and the cruelty of the European hordes. The task of civilizing and Christianizing two millenniums was more difficult than we know. Secular government would have gotten nowhere with it. The Church had to furnish intelligence, scholars, rulers, statesmen. Only the Church could keep her life from being contaminated with repeated barbarian invasions. The Church gave the State a regard for humanity and taught order and statescraft. For example, take the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. They were centuries of great political advances. These centuries produced Thomas Aquinas, Roger Bacon, and St. Francis.

Then I think we should have due regard for the influence of theology in producing a dwindling enthusiasm for human slavery. Christianity took the force out of the enslavement of human beings. Christian communities first demanded that the right of life and death over the slave be taken from the master. Later on the demand came for humane treatment of slaves. Finally slavery was abolished. It is perhaps difficult for us to appreciate how deep-seated slavery was. According to Aristotle, slavery was necessary and in-

herent in the basic inequality of human nature. But Aristotle lost out. Christianity won. Slavery and the doctrine of the virtual divinity of men could not forever go hand in hand. It is certainly an inspiring chapter in Christian history to read how the Christian preachers fought for centuries for the ideal of human freedom. As early as the ninth century we find that Agobard, Archbishop of Lyons, said that it is intolerable that any master should have the power to prohibit the baptism of slaves. He maintained that men are by nature equal. Then we find that St. Isidore goes to the very root of the matter and finds that slavery has not its origin in nature but in sin, and this sin of slavery must be abolished. After the great revival in England under John Wesley, we find there is great agitation for abolishing slavery. That the revival was followed by anti-slavery agitation could not have been accidental. The evangelicals found it very difficult to countenance human slavery. Later on they threw themselves wholeheartedly into the political struggle that abolished slavery in England.

It was during the Middle Ages that the idea of constitutional government arose anew in the world. This idea that the authority of the ruler rested on a contract or covenant, of course, came directly from the Old Testament. This contract idea rests on the more fundamental conception that men have a right to rule themselves. Every man has reason and capacity to be free. We can never overestimate the part Christianity has played in making that idea practical in civil government. There is a close connection between the idea of democratic and free government and the Christian idea of the equality of all men.

Since the Reformation, the greatest political in-

fluence of the Church has been the impetus given through Protestant theology and activity to Nationalism. Catholicism naturally gave impetus to mediævalism. Protestantism by its nature gave birth to Nationalism. Dr. S. Parkes Cadman has done admirable work in showing how the Renaissance, the Reformation, the personality of Martin Luther, and the political wisdom of John Calvin and the various translations of the Bible created modern Nationalism. Through the Puritanism of Holland and of England and of America, Nationalism was given another opportunity of development. This we shall study more particularly in the next chapter.

The Bible had great influence in guiding us from an outworn Mediævalism to the new Nationalism. The Bible guided us into the way of democracy. Without democracy Nationalism would have become insolent and intolerable.

Again the Church needs to be awake. Nationalism is in danger. The minute Nationalism loses the Christian ideals of justice and righteousness then it is infinitely worse than the government of the Middle Ages. But how shall modern Nationalism remain close to the needs of humanity unless Christian ministers preach on the science of politics? Unless the people of the churches are informed generally on the affairs of State how can they be efficient citizens for the new and difficult day ahead for Nationalism? Nationalism is in danger of becoming selfish and autocratic. As I see it, the only hope for Nationalism is to merge its interests in a broad and tolerant Christian Internationalism.

VI

THE DEBT OF DEMOCRACY TO COLONIAL PREACHING

"Some American conceptions of popular sovereignty were evolved out of the Puritan Revolution, others were obtained from the contact of the Pilgrims with Continental Protestantism in Holland. The French Encyclopedists played their part in the process, giving to Jefferson and the patriots who agreed with him not a few basic ideas of democracy. But the inescapable atmosphere and the traditions of a thousand years of Anglo-Saxon life and law are discernible in the leading ideas of our constitutionalists, especially of Washington, Franklin, Hamilton, Madison, and Marshall."—*Christianity and the State*, S. PARKES CADMAN.

PROTESTANTISM and democracy were married at Geneva," says W. S. Athearn. It is not a mere historical accident that democracy has flourished in Protestant lands. They are rooted in the same kind of philosophy. A free Church and a free State complement each other.

We have tried to point out that Nationalism and democracy, as we know them today, date back to the Reformation and before. The Reformation majored in free thinking. The emancipation of thinking always precedes political emancipation. Prior to the Reformation the Church decided what a man should think. After the Reformation private thinking became more popular. A man could have direct personal connection with truth. Vigorous individualism and a high esti-

mation of personality are necessary qualities for citizenship in the land of the free. M. Emile De Laveleye says, "The ideas which stand at the base of modern liberty always found their most eloquent defenders in Protestantism."

I believe all this must be kept in mind, if we try to understand the part religion has taken in the making of our Constitutional Republic. We must also bear in mind that the New England fathers had a wonderful training in constitutional government in England. The cradle of modern democracy is found there. For centuries the English people wrestled with unwilling kings for a limited monarchy. The right of suffrage, trial by jury and other personal liberties came only after generations of terrible struggle. All that England had attained in free government became the heritage of the colonists. They had only to carry it forward to a more perfect form and to greater functioning in the great social political laboratory of America.

The average book written on the development of American constitutional government gives only scant attention to the service rendered by the colonial preachers. Many writers almost entirely overlook this contribution. We would almost think that the constitution builders had no religion whatsoever. It is a fact, however, that Protestant Christianity was a dominant factor in pre-Revolutionary days. De Tocqueville said, "There is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence than in America. It must be regarded as the foremost of the political institutions in the country." Bryce has this to say, "It was religious zeal and religious conscience which led to the founding of New England. The spirit of the Colonies has in a large measure passed into the whole

nation. Religion and conscience have been a constantly active force in the American commonwealth ever since." Not only were the founders of our nation men of deep Christian convictions, but throughout the proceedings of the Continental Congress and other nation-building gatherings a high sense of Christian reverence was vividly present in the framing of our basic institutions. Dr. Cadman points out that America was basically, originally, and persistently Christian down through history.

The aim of Winthrop and his followers in coming to Massachusetts was to form a Christian State. The Bible was not only a rule of life, it was the law-book of the land. Citizenship and church membership were regarded as the same thing.

More important than this, however, is the fact that the nature of the theology of the New England pioneers led them directly into the consideration of democracy. In fact, the theology of the New England preachers became the basis of American democracy. They believed that God Himself was limited by law or by covenant. God Himself would not violate His agreement with man. If He did, they would defy Him. The preachers reasoned from this that man must be governed by charter or by constitution. They drew their texts from the Old Testament to uphold this belief. When the Constitution is violated then the ruler is a tyrant and it becomes immoral to obey him. The identity of colonial theology and the interpretation of it by the preachers with the later written constitutions of the States and of the Federal Government is surprising and startling, when first discovered. Rev. Mayhew contends, "Neither God nor nature has given any man the right of dominion over any society inde-

pendently of that society's approbation and consent to be governed." The preachers further reasoned that man being made in the image of God and, therefore, being of divine origin, having a common fatherhood in God, and a common brotherhood in man, freedom was the right of man. Freedom was the right of man because of his very high origin. A child of God could not rightly be the subject or slave of any man.

We find that the Bible was the political textbook of young America. Passages like the first book of Samuel and the eighth chapter were expounded so frequently that the last man in the community understood it and believed it. The passages giving the covenant relations of God to man became favourite texts for great pulpit messages and election sermons.

"In the sermons that the printing press has preserved, the philosophy of John Locke is curiously blended with illustrations from the Old Testament. While the right of the people to abolish and institute governments is proclaimed, George III is reminded of the fate of Rehoboam; and states that do not furnish their quotas of men and money to the American cause are told that the people of Meroz were cursed for similar faults. Even the Reverend Oliver Hart, of Charleston, who found time in the very midst of the Revolution to preach a strong sermon on *Dancing Exploded*, was so energetic in his support of independence that he did not dare to remain in the city after it was captured by the British."—*The Rise of American Civilization*, BEARD.

The very special political service rendered by the New England clergy was made through the election sermon. Before voting, the whole electorate would go to church and hear a two-hour sermon of high grade

political philosophy. Then they would march in a procession solemnly to the voting-place. The procession was led by the minister and the magistrate. Under the fresh glow of this sermon on the high function of government ballots were religiously cast. These election sermons were often printed and given wide circulation. Alice Baldwin, in *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution*, suggests that these election sermons were the textbooks on politics.

The Rev. Cotton Mather says, "New England, being a country whose interests are remarkably enwrapped in ecclesiastical circumstances, ministers ought to concern themselves in politics." And they surely did just that. Indeed, they were the best informed group of men in the land and they had the best propaganda opportunity. Some of the more timid preachers argued to strengthen themselves by saying, "Why should not the Scripture passages dealing with civil government be expounded from the pulpit?" Most of the colonial preachers, however, made no such apologies. They just took for granted that the full Gospel includes directions for civil government. It has been proven beyond any doubt that the pulpits of the colonial period fairly resounded with political preaching. Thousands of political sermons have been preserved to this day. The research work of Alice Baldwin has established this fact so splendidly that future historians and writers on constitutional government in America need not take such a one-sided view of this, as they have in the past.

It has been established, for example, that Rev. Jonas Clarke, who was a friend of John Hancock, was accustomed to have the patriots meet at his home to discuss politics. He was looked upon by his own community

as a statesman. Sunday after Sunday he preached on the moral, religious, and civil rights of resistance to a government that had broken constitutional contracts. Elisha Williams preached that a government that did not originate with the people was not a government but a tyranny and should be resisted. Rev. Andrew Eliot even went so far as to lead in the revolt against the stamp tax. Rev. Dan Foster, of Connecticut, in 1774, wrote six mighty sermons on Civil Government in order to enlighten his people on the questions of the day. And we know that Roger Williams went farther than anyone in his demand for religious and civil liberty. He agreed with the more conservative of the clergy that the foundation of civil power lay with the people.

It might be an interesting research study to trace the civic values that accrued from the great revival movements of the eighteenth century. It seems to me that there can be no doubt that great spiritual awakenings quicken the pulse of democracy. When the people took to reading the Bible, which is the source-book of liberty, as they did in England and the Netherlands and later on in America, they saw a new dignity in man and very naturally they became better prepared to govern themselves. "Wesley and Whitefield prepared the way for Cromwell and Washington."

"The Great Awakening" of 1740 under Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield was, of course, primarily religious and evangelical in purpose and spirit. But I think we have overlooked the significance of this awakening to the developing of an appetite for free government. I think it became one of the inspiring forces to the men who had to strike for independence. The very essence of revival in religion is emancipation

of the mind and the soul. It quickened the life of the people socially, intellectually, and morally. Life became worth fighting for.

We know that one of Whitefield's followers speaks grandly of the natural rights of men to judge for themselves in religion, as well as in the matters of the civil state. Nathaniel Hunn, another of the Whitefield preachers, gave an election sermon in Connecticut in 1747 on "The Welfare of a Government Considered." Freedom fairly sparkles in every sentence of this sermon. It was, of course, quite natural that the violent revulsion movements should also carry over into the realm of Civil Government. A free evangelical quickening of the life of any people is the best guarantee for the life of free government. Indifference to religion and carelessness about citizenship duties go hand in hand.

That the American Revolution was incubated and hatched in the study of the colonial preachers and then hurled out into the world from the pulpit is closer to the truth than we might think at first. The facts seem to point that way. The colonial governments seem to depend upon the clergy for inspiration and for propaganda. For example, the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts made a request of the clergy to advise obedience to the Continental Congress and to stir up the people to resist the oppressions of the mother country. The colonial governments had the election sermons printed and used extensively for patriotic propaganda, before the Revolutionary War. There was, of course, no radio and there were no daily papers common among the people. Most information came to the people from the pulpit. *The pulpit was the press.*

A hundred years of preaching on covenant relations,

natural rights of man, social contracts, the right of resistance, and the constant repetition of it prepared the Americans to go through with the struggle for independence. General Lincoln wrote to Washington one day, "It is very fortunate for us that the clergy are pretty generally with us. They have in this State a very great influence over us."

The most interesting way to measure the power of the preachers in stirring up the people for revolution is to read the literature of criticism by the enemies of the colonists. The name of Rev. Daniel Collins was sent to General Gage as the most dangerous character to the king's cause. Laymen lamented the "growing lust for power among the clergy and their constant ambition to interest themselves in the affairs of State." "Ministers of religion in large numbers, especially the dissenters, seem to have turned from the Gospel to revolution." "Does Mr. Wilberd preach against oppression?" anxiously inquired John Adams of his wife. She said, "The clergy of every denomination thunder and lighten every Sabbath." A Tory, Mr. Cresswell, in speaking of the ministers, said, "They are mere retailers of politics, sowers of sedition and rebellion, and serve to excite the people to arms. The Presbyterian clergy are particularly active in supporting the measures of Congress from the rostrum."

Chief Justice Oliver criticized the clergy severely immediately preceding the Revolution. "Pulpits ring their chimes upon blood guiltiness in order to incite the people. The pulpits ring with peals of malice against the courts of justice," he complained. An Englishman, in 1774, writing about the clergy and their sermons, said, "Most wicked, malicious, and inflammatory harangues."

The hand of the preacher, though, is seen best in the framing of our written constitutions. It may be true, as some one has said, that written constitutions do not create a nation, but I think they do define its powers and protect the liberties of men under a republican form of government. A hundred years of preaching on liberty was finally crowded into four pages of print. Even the phraseology of the Constitution can be traced to election sermons. Early in the eighteenth century Rev. John Wise, of Ipswich, contended that the end of all good government is to cultivate humanity and promote the happiness of all. His sermons undoubtedly influenced Thomas Jefferson, when he wrote the Declaration of Independence.

On May 31st, 1638, Rev. Thomas Hooker preached a great sermon to the General Court at Hartford, Connecticut. He maintained in this sermon that the fundamental authority in government was in the free consent of the people, "That the free choice of magistrates belongs unto the people by God's own allowance," and those who appoint officers should also have the power to limit their activity. On January 14th, 1649, the Freemen of Connecticut assembled to adopt a written constitution. The hand of Thomas Hooker is plainly discernible in every paragraph of this constitution, according to John Fiske. This was the first written constitution creating a government known in history. Thomas Hooker deserves more than any other man to be called the Father of Constitutional Government. The Constitution of the United States of America is a lineal descendant of the Constitution of Connecticut.

Alice Baldwin again points out that one of the fundamental principles of American Constitutional

Government is that no one is bound to obey an unconstitutional act. People sometimes wonder why courts in America have the power to declare laws void. This principle was grounded into American thinking by the ministers, who for the first sixty years of the eighteenth century preached that governments must obey law and that he, who resists one in authority, who is violating law, is himself not a rebel, but a protector of law.

Yes, democracy, as we know it in America, is largely a product of the theology of the colonial preachers. But not only that. After the Revolution, there was the task to keep democracy safe. The evangelical churches set to work heroically to ground the people in the practical everyday working of democracy. The principles of American democracy and free government were voiced in camp meetings, town meetings, and in wayside chapels, until it became rooted into the very heart of America.

A study of the work of new churches, like the Methodist Church, in civilizing and christianizing America in its great western trek will some day give new light on the debt of democracy to American religion. Some of our later writers of history seem to begin to recognize this fact.

“Nevertheless, at the very moment, when Deism was playing havoc with theological sovereignty, there arrived from England yet another religious movement more akin to Edwards’ Great Awakening than to the spirit of Franklin, Washington, and Jefferson. The new faith was known as Methodism and its founder, John Wesley, on his own confession, was in some respects a disciple of Edwards. Under another guise this movement represented the dissidence of dissent, the levelling fervour which, as Burke remarked, had sharpened the antagonism between America

and the mother country, and was in the course of time to furnish the inspiration for a non-conformist upheaval in England.

"By proposing to reduce somewhat the Anglican hierarchy and to elevate the laity, Methodism added to the democracy of the pew. In religion, it emphasized the salvation of the individual by prayer and conversion. In morals, it waged a puritan-like war on dancing and frivolity in general while it specifically exalted the virtues of industry and sobriety. If the sermons and hymns of Methodism jarred on Jefferson's sceptical ears, its emphasis on self-expression as against authority and its appeal to the humble as against the mighty contributed to the swelling stream of mass consciousness that made republicanism secure, beyond the possibility of reaction."—*The Rise of American Civilization*, BEARD.

The late Associate Justice, David James Brewer, said, "Christianity has entered into the life of this Republic; it came with its beginning and prompted them; has been identified with its toils and trials; shared in its victories; cheered in the hour of darkness and gloom, and stands today prophetic of untold blessing in the future."

There is no doubt of the debt of democracy to the religion of America in the past. The preaching of the democracy of the Old Testament and the expounding of the theology of Calvin helped us to create the best government ever known for a free people.

Nor must we overlook the christianizing of the westward trek of civilization to the Pacific. The pioneer preacher was a statesman and a patriot. To civilize, democratize, and christianize the land west of the Alleghenies was the greatest moral task of history.

"The West stubbornly resisted civilization. The woods,

the rivers, the deserts, the mountains, and the savage tribes and the vastness of it all almost baffled the first settlers. But the American pioneer, urged on by hunger for land and lured on by the spirit of adventure, finally by slow degrees bridged the rivers, bored the mountains, and made the desert blossom as a rose.

“The resistance of the West to civilization and the final victory of the pioneer make up a story more significant to civilization than any previous migration story of the race. It is nothing less than the story of the making of the United States of America.

“The epic story of pioneer life, of exploration, conquest, and settlement, has been written and rewritten in the lives of great men. They were lured on by the challenge of the unknown. For the most part the advance guard of these movements were daring men, bent on discovery, exploration, conquest, determined to subdue the perils of the wilderness, the lurking savages, and nature’s unfriendly forces. Many times the struggle was a hard and pitiless one. No quarter was asked and seldom was it given. All the sterner qualities of manhood were required to face the dangers of those early days. Certain types of character were developed and proved by the very effort demanded. The scout, the ranger, the trapper, the miner, the cattleman, the homesteader, these were all a vital part of each westward movement. And in this motley company, motivated by quite a different passion, were to be found humble men of God, Sky Pilots of the Infinite, restraining, guiding, ennobling the rude primitive life of which they formed a part.

“A true historian must give a large place in the development of the West to missionary activity, both Protestant and Roman Catholic.

“Here the adventurer braving the unknown, the fur trader unscrupulous in trade, the miner bent on finding gold, the cattlemen and the sheepmen greedy of range, the homesteader trying to eke out a meagre living, the gambler, the highwayman, the vigilante, and the preacher, all thrown

together in the great crucible of human values, to determine whether man or nature, vice or virtue, love or greed, God or evil would eventually triumph. And always in the background there hovered the grim spectres of Indian attack, long trails, hard winters, sickness far from a doctor's care, loneliness and danger. And here as elsewhere in the conquest of the West the kindly minister of God was found.

"These men found life in the raw. They dealt with elemental forces. It was all a grim, hard struggle for survival. Loneliness, hardship, privation, and danger faced them on every side. Manhood alone counted. Men who would speak for God must be men of simple faith and deep sincerity. Frontiersmen cared not for creed or dogma or doctrine. Could Christ help a man on the long trail? Could He make a man more of a man amid the daily temptations and dangers? These were the only questions that mattered. As the man, shot in a running fight with the Indians, said to the preacher bending over him, 'If your God can do anything fer a feller like me, tell Him to do it quick.' Those early preachers of the Gospel cast long shadows behind them, down through the years, and broken men, sinful men, penitent men and women have found forgiveness and healing through the message of their lives."—*The Last of the Old West*, by the author.

But has the duty of the Church ended? Is the place of religion in government no more? Is democracy safe and self-sufficient and no more in need of spiritual inspiration? Let us in the following chapters take a deeper look at modern democracy. Is there danger of autocracy within the form of our democracy? May America cease to be Christian?

VII

IS DEMOCRACY SAFE IN AMERICA?

"Before there was ever an American Republic, thinkers in other lands had wrought out the gospel of liberty, equality, and fraternity as a thesis; but our fathers proceeded from theory to practice. Holding that government must be by the people and for the people, they laid the foundations of a nation dedicated to the truth that all men are created equal—equal before God, before the law, and in their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, each having inalienable rights which no State can confer or deny—trusting the free man to guard his freedom and to find in his freedom the solution of whatever problems may arise.

"That is to say, they reversed the theological teaching of ages and risked the fate of a nation on faith in the essential goodness of human nature and its kinship with God! Surely he is blind who does not see how radical is the religious meaning of this first principle of our American theology. America is a symbol of confidence in human nature; it assumes the inherent dignity and sacredness of man, and our history has justified that faith."—The Religious Basis of a Better World Order, by JOSEPH FORT NEWTON.

WE fought the World War to make the whole world safe for democracy. Now leading political and religious thinkers are not altogether sure that democracy is safe even in America. Democracy is attacked, ridiculed and scorned. Henry Menchen thinks that democracy is incomparably idiotic and amusing. The whole group of eugenic philosophers are surly towards democracy. It is also hinted that science, while not openly hostile, is and must for ever

be opposed to democracy and human equality. The writers of despair, those who work so hard for a speedy collapse of civilization, raise a united voice against the leveling influence of democracy. To them only aristocracy will save humanity from blank mediocrity.

Even Dean Inge sees nothing in democracy but "an organized system for the plunder of minorities." Oswald Spengler announces to the wide world that the Parliamentary Age is irrevocably ended. A people has no rights except to be well governed. Democracy is an "overdrawn picture of earthly bliss." It is impossible for this earth, man being what he is.

This opposition to free government is more intellectual and more philosophical and has a more respectable literature than previous onslaughts against a government by the people. Alexander Hamilton's distrust of democracy was temperamental and ungrounded in philosophy. Modern opposition attacks the very fundamental concepts underlying democracy. That sovereignty is inherent in man is flatly denied. Natural equality of man is made out to be the most pernicious delusion that has ever afflicted humanity. A babe owes his existence to his parents, not to himself. He owes his bringing up to his parents and the school. He owes his importance to the work he does and his safety is due to the State. Then why has he rights? He owes everything to others. He has duties, but he has no rights.

Then I find that social diagnosticians say that we are very sick, biologically diseased. Racial impoverishment is the plague of civilization, and democracy is held responsible as the chief cause of this. "Democracy encourages the multiplication of inferiors." Even William McDougall complains of democracy as the

cause of "the influx of inferior types into our nation." Sick people cannot make a healthy State. "The more sick people you bring to the polls the sicker the government will be." So the cure is not more or better democracy, but rather an "enlightened" autocracy.

Those who oppose democracy seem to have made a more thorough study of the weaknesses of American politics than those of us who are for democracy. It will do us no harm, however, to know the faults of American politics.

Our alarmists may be our benefactors. One of the gravest faults pointed out by our critics is the difficulty the majority has to show any sympathy with the minority. It is claimed that we have the problem of the minority in very acute form in American politics just now. The majority is pictured graphically as a coarse giant and a heartless autocrat forcing his mandates down the throat of a persecuted minority. Another fault of democracy, as it has worked out in America, is that it gives too much opportunity for the herd instinct. It destroys in this way, it is said, the very individuality for which it was originated. So democracy becomes a rule of ignorance and indifference. Only fifty-one per cent of the electorate voted in the last presidential election. This, of course, indicates a lack of interest in the affairs of the government. The conversation one hears in the home or in the shop or in the store regarding politics is usually of a momentary kind and lacking in real political insight. There is no real community debate on public questions. Even college students take very little interest in politics. Their time is taken up with athletics and the trivial social life in the college. The average citizen is cynical about governmental affairs. He may have terribly difficult

problems in his business life, but he never looks to the government for solution. The average citizen has only a passing interest about which party is in control. One party is as good as another, he feels. There is certainly a steady diminution of popular interest in statesmanship.

So American democracy is heralded to the European masses as decay in government, government by incompetents and a jazzy mediocrity. Prof. Steiner says, "In the city lies the doom of civilization." There is enough truth in this to make it sting in the heart of a true American patriot. The city is surely the biggest failure of democracy. The large city with a church in every fifth block reeks in political injustice, graft, and crime.

Another indictment of democracy is the refusal of the strongest citizens to consider politics as a career. In the beginning of our Republic the greatest minds devoted themselves to the affairs of State. Now the keenest brains are pre-empted for the reorganization of industry into giant corporations. Harold J. Laski, an Englishman, in his trenchant criticism of American politics, gives the reason why big men do not seek for a place in the legislatures of America. "The chance to sit on the committee with no big issues to debate, the prospect of introducing bills which will never be reported, the opportunity to write speeches that will rarely be delivered—these are not horizons towards which an able man will strain."

It is further pointed out that we in America are trying to make an eighteenth century program of government do the business of a twentieth century nation of vast wealth and territory. It is said that we elect our presidents without regard to their past political experi-

ence and that the presidential election is a sort of sanctified lottery game. Then the friction between the legislative and executive departments of our Government seem to give European critics a great deal of concern. Our legislatures do not give great political questions the light of day in debate. Most of the work is done in the dark recesses of committee rooms. "It seems to be the deliberate purpose of the organization of a legislature to reduce opposition to speechless nullity."

There is certainly enough truth in this cataloging of the deficiencies of democracy to make us concerned about the future of government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Democracy must always be an active achievement by an intelligent and spiritually minded people. It must always be a race against injustice, unrighteousness, and autocracy. The minute we relax, the minute we lose interest in the high purposes of free government, then we lose it.

This concern for American democracy becomes greater, when we look about us in the world of governments. The opposition to democracy is no longer academic. It has left the desk of the political philosopher and has gone to practice in actual and important nations. Nation after nation has turned its back upon free government. Let us study for a moment the most outstanding example of back-slidden democracy. Italy has turned to absolute autocracy. Benito Mussolini, the Premier of Italy, said to a vast cheering multitude, "Today, May the sixth, we solemnly bury the falsehood of universal democratic suffrage." And the moment was solemn. It was done in a sacramental mood.

Mussolini is dancing on the grave of Garibaldi's democracy. He is the absolute master of forty million

people. Free speech is openly repudiated. An American correspondent writes that he is bound by the worst censorship ever imposed, that he cannot write anything that might reflect on the Fascisti. There is room today in Italy only for Fascists and non-Fascists. There is no room for anti-Fascists. Suffrage has absolutely gone to the scrap-heap. Even the mayors of the cities are appointed by the Premier. Italy is a "silent and shadowy world where men are afraid to be seen in the streets in the company of truth." Force has been lifted to the dignity of a political creed. Political opposition has been snubbed out. Passivity is becoming the characteristic of men who were once courageous and free born.

I came in from Alexandria to Naples. I got into a taxi-cab. The taxi driver could speak English. I asked him what he thought of Mussolini and Fascism. All I got from him was a significant shrug of his shoulders. No one dares to speak. Every person is watched. The severest penalties known in history, even unto deportation and annihilation, are used on those who are disloyal.

But Italy is only one example of many States of the collapse of democracy and the rise of dictatorships since the World War. Italy has attracted more attention because of the picturesque and colourful personality of Premier Mussolini.

What does this new autocracy mean? Has it a political philosophy? Is there a new tendency in political government? How will this affect America? Is America in danger of a Mussolini? What causes democracy to die? Are there any symptoms of free government slipping in America? These are certainly questions that we ought to be asking at this time.

Just what is Fascism? What does Mussolini stand for? During his career, Mussolini has stood for practically every political philosophy known. He has been a Republican and a Monarchist. He has taken the side of pacifism and he has been an ardent militarist. He has in turn taken up internationalism and imperialism. He makes no explanation for his change of mind. He needs to make no explanation. He has no political philosophy. He is merely a political opportunist. Some call him a pragmatic realist in government. That which works and produces results for the moment is his rule of action. He really challenges every doctrine of democracy. He says people have no rights, they have only duties. He challenges absolutely liberty, equality, and parliamentary government. He says he is ready to walk over the more or less decomposed body of liberty. Efficiency is the sole measure of success. Order and production are the watch-words. The democracy of Mazzini and Cavour has been obliterated.

Is there an explanation for the loss of liberty in Italy? Why did democracy so utterly fail that a Mussolini could be possible? The War showed up the hollowness of political life in Italy. The chill winds of Sovietism blew down upon the people and they became disaffected. Civil war and social revolution threatened. The old political gang did nothing but temporize and play politics. Politicians proved themselves utterly unable to cope with the situation. Back of that situation we find a lack of education and a lack of spiritual life. The people had lost their idealism. They were grovelling in the mud. We must also take into consideration the terrible economic situation after the war. All Europe was disillusioned, weary, war-

sick, and totally unable to sustain democracy. Therefore, democracy died in Italy. And, likewise, it has died in Spain, Portugal, and Poland. In England, democracy is feeble. The current writers of Europe generally repudiate the principles of democracy.

Therefore, I believe that American Christian patriots must hasten to become concerned for the purity and the virility of our politics. Clearly, politics can not any longer be left to ward-heelers and to second-rate professional office-seekers. It now becomes the high duty of the Church and Christian patriots to study the science of government and to help to halt the degeneration which has been going on, when we were asleep lulled by the "simple Gospel" or allured by the opportunities of amassing personal fortunes.

The real American political thinker goes deeper down in his thinking on government than the usual political philosopher of Europe. All their talk about a return to autocracy or to the rule of the select in society has no attraction to him. A good look at the "stench of history" is enough for him. No one is good enough to rule another. The so-called better class is known in a generation or two to become the lower class. Only a virile Christian democracy will bring man out in his highest and best possibilities as a divine being. Americans think of democracy not only as a political theory, but as a grand insistence that class distinction shall be done away with, that men have a dignity and a power that must be expressed in freedom. V. F. Calverton, in *The Current History Magazine*, points out that the contest going on today between democracy and despotism is fundamental and involves the very deepest philosophy of life as well as religion. He goes on to say, "the fundamental con-

flict over democracy, therefore, is not in the matter of form, but rather in that of substance. It is two antithetical attitudes towards life and the world that clash. The one is marked by a faith in select groups, classes or individuals as the only source of social advance. The other, faith in the multitude or the mass as a possible source of social progress and control."

Mr. Calverton also points out that the attack on political democracy in America is really not to the point, until we have had a chance to work out economic democracy. The basis of the world today is economic. In Washington's day the basis of the world was political. When political matters were adjusted correctly, then the people were happy. Today political democracy without economic democracy is an impotent gesture. Power is today vested quite largely in moneyed groups. The worker is more or less of a wage-slave. He is not really a free man in the original sense of the word. Our political parties also express the ideas of ruling groups. Very often candidates are controlled by the technique of an industrial dominance of our civilization. The democratic conception of life must now work itself out to do away with the contradiction that exists between politics and economics.

In a situation like this the ambassador of God, the prophet in the pulpit certainly must become interested in economic freedom. There is just as much need for the pulpit to champion economic freedom now, as there was for the New England preachers to champion political freedom in their day.

It is also an interesting fact to discover that free government flourishes today only in Anglo-Saxon, American, and Scandinavian countries. This can not be an accident. It is almost equivalent to saying that

evangelical religion is necessary to the life of democracy. But if evangelical religion becomes academic or timid or too other-worldly where will democracy find tonic and strength? So let us take this matter up in the next chapter on "Christianity Saving Democracy."

VIII

CHRISTIANITY SAVING DEMOCRACY

"When we look closely we soon see that no firm line can be drawn marking off those sides of public life and its ordering which properly concern the Church from those which do not. The 'English Review' lately put the Archbishop of York in its 'pillory,' because of his Grace uttered some very wise and Christian sentiments concerning the present outlook in Europe; it complained that he had broken a tacit understanding, whereby the clergy refrain from meddling in politics; yet it may safely be presumed that no such objection would have been raised to a plea from the same quarter that the Government should take steps to hasten the building of houses.

"In a similar way, Lloyd George, when Prime Minister, called upon the churches to help the Government to deal with the temperance question; a little later he was very indignant because the churches helped him to deal with the Irish question. There is no doubt that a very widespread public opinion supposes that there is an ascertainable frontier of the Church's legitimate concern; but there is not. No department of human life lies outside the scope of moral principle, and in none are the order of life and the maxims governing public action without influence on character. There is a frontier of the Church's legitimate concern, but it is not one that excludes any human interest; it only defines the Church's method of dealing with that interest. The limitation of the Church's sphere is not a matter of area but of method."—*Essay in Christian Politics and Kindred Essays*, WILLIAM TEMPLE.

IN the last chapter we tried to say that democracy is challenged by political thinkers in America and in Europe. Not only is government by the people being

questioned by swivel-chair philosophers, but it is now being repudiated by nation after nation in the establishment of dictatorships. We have also had to confess to grave deficiencies and gross failures in the working out of democracy in American politics. But for our abounding wealth and our fresh opportunities and our expansion westward, our democracy might have collapsed ere this. Natural resources and limitless race vitality may have saved us from ruin. Dr. Parkes Cadman coins a rich sentence when he says, "The road to ruin for an ignorant and selfish democracy is far shorter than for any other kind of misgovernment." We have also noticed our failure to democratize industry. So it is in the true spirit of Christian patriotism and love of country that we are concerned for the future of this land of the free. History and experience teaches us that freedom may be lost.

Let us again freshly remind ourselves that our Republic is the outgrowth of a strong religious spirit. Let us never forget that the ideals of justice, equality, and brotherhood are the religious basis of our land. When these ideals grow dim, democracy fades. Materialism always undermines democratic civilization. The spirit of irreligion will soon result in a low estimation of man and later on even the very form of democracy will be lost. Therefore, let us consider how democracy can be saved from corruption and ruin. What will a nation committed to the separation of Church and State permit the Church to do about it? What can the prophet-preachers do? What can be done to call thoughtless people to the consideration of the foundations and fundamentals of statehood? What shall we do for national salvation?

"After the Middle Ages Anglo-Saxon people descended to a sort of State idolatry." This amounted to practically a deification of the State. It was held that the State is its own end and justifies itself. They gave in to a Machiavellian materialism. This kind of political doctrine more or less clings to us today and modern civilization must face it. We have a pathetic faith in the State today. But anyone who travels in Central Europe or in the Balkan States and studies the practical working of the Versailles Treaty will have a rude shock to his faith in the divine wisdom of an unguided State. Almost worse than the World War was the work of this treaty in deliberately tearing up national boundaries and sowing the seed of a hundred future wars. Most of the events since the war and the so-called statesmanship of the world leaders have convinced an increasing number of people of the barrenness of secular leadership. "We should learn from the lamentable shortcomings of the State and its officials never again to render unto Cæsar the things which are God's. If you would not thresh grainless straw do not search in politics for what is not there."—*Christianity and the State*, S. PARKES CADMAN.

I believe that the time is ripe for a scientific and a common sense attitude toward the State. The State is what we make it. It contains only that which we bring to it. It is poor and vicious, when we are poor and vicious. The State cannot be dedicated to high service if the ideals of service are lacking in the people. Righteousness and injustice cannot be the virtues of the State, when divorced from religion, which alone engenders these virtues. In other words, our Government is the organization which carries into effect the

sum total of our idealism, religion, and character. But when we divorce religion from a concern for government, we will leave the State a drifting victim to the wiles and machinations of evil doers.

History shouts at us that the State which sins shall die. There is no better illustration of that than the brilliant and cultured Greece. She had strength and perfection and a wide mental outlook in her statehood. Ramsay Muir, in speaking of Athens to a crowd of us on a ship on the Mediterranean, said, "I venture to say that the mass of free men have never in the history of the world so fully been enabled to enjoy all that is best in the life of a man, and to develop all the powers in the mind of man to so high an extent as the Athenians did, during that brief but brilliant period. Now, the nation that did that, the only nation that has ever done that, seems to me to be the greatest political nation." And we can go further and write volumes in glorification of Greek life. We may wax eloquent about the politics of Athens. The Periclesian day with the building of the Parthenon stands out in the minds of many as the climax of great politics.

Yet the disturbing fact in all this is that Athens endured in her height only sixty years. We can never quite separate greatness in government from duration and permanency. Athens decayed and the republican form of government was lost. What was the cause of the decay of this most perfect of all civilizations?

Before we can answer this question we must disentangle ourselves from the false glamour of classical history. The freedom that the Greek talked about was something quite different from that which we crave. It was merely a constitutional ideal. It was never intended to be carried out into practice. Slave

labour was the foundation of the Greek State. When we idealize Greek freedom, we entirely forget the "Greek intolerance of everything that was not Greek." The Greek hated foreigners. Then we must not overlook the limitations of Greek civilization. Greek beauty was almost limited to beauty of bodies and to beauty of buildings. There was no appreciation of beauty of the sea and the landscape. Romance, mystery, picturesqueness, and spiritual aspiration were lacking in Greek life. However, the fatal lack was the utter absence of an ethical and spiritual religion. The Greek knew not God. His every-day life was a "complex of hideous depravities." There was no regard for human brotherhood, justice, or righteousness. Therefore, the Greek Republic collapsed.

It does not require any extraordinary insight into American life to see similar deficiencies in life today. We do not need an elaborate survey of America to convince us that we are slipping religiously. We cannot but wonder though what would have happened, if the brilliance of the Greek mind could have been joined to the passion for righteousness of the Old Testament prophets. Could not the greatness of Greece have been saved for civilization and would we not now be a thousand years advanced over our present culture?

The purity and the vitality of democracy is essentially a religious question. Not only did the idea of rule by the people originate with the Old Testament, but the ideal of democracy was the very heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have seen how modern dictatorships major on institutions, organization and force. The single individual has no rights, no consideration is given him. He has only duties. The Gospel

of Jesus, on the other hand, was centred in the expression of greatness in the individual. For example, the institution of the Sabbath must be subordinated to the needs of hungry men. The very choruses of heaven strike up, when one single soul finds himself. The whole universe of all the ages existed for one individual, who finds relationship with God. The entire wealth of the world is as nothing to the value of one man. Jesus centred His philosophy in persons. Democracy is founded on this same doctrine of the supreme greatness of the humblest citizen. No outward pomp, wealth, or hereditary office counts in the face of the rights of persons. The minute democracy lets down on that great religious idea it is lost to the world. When Christianity is preached dynamically and with freedom and abandon by educated and consecrated prophet-preachers, then the spark of democracy is kept alive. It can be done in no other way. When democracy is managed alone by office-seeking politicians then the rights of the people will be neglected sooner or later.

The Kingdom of God in a dictatorship will have a poor starved life. The outward separation of Church and State demands a closer union of Church and State in spirit. The kinship of patriotism and loyalty to an eternal God have been recognized down the ages by great statesmen as well as by leading ecclesiastics. Now it remains for us to work out a practical program of Church and State co-operation to the end that humanity be blessed.

First, we must recognize that the State has a soul, is a spiritual entity, and has a conscience and a definite moral responsibility. In the second place, we must recognize that the Church has a spiritual duty to the

State as great as that to the individual. Clean politics in an actively Christian State must be the supreme goal of the Church. The constitutional principle of the separation of Church and State must not be so construed as to release the preacher of his responsibility for saving democracy from sin and death. "The things of God are so inclusive that the things of Cæsar cannot have full control of any realm of life."

So the Church must co-operate in upholding the highest idealism for the State. The State must never be allowed to think of itself as an end, but only as a means to the common good of mankind. The Kingdom of God and perfect life on this earth must be the supreme end of the government as well as that of the Church. The State can work towards the kingdom ideal by passing good laws, discouraging evil, and encouraging right living. The Church must co-operate by giving instruction and inspiration for the carrying out of these laws. Just now the Church needs to carry on a great educational program to teach respect for law. The government cannot do this effectively. The State also needs the Church as a spiritual society to keep it toned up to the higher ideals. And the Church must always insist that no question can be merely secular or political.

One of the most effective avenues open for the Church in working for higher spiritual democracy is the instruction of its members in political activity and the inspiration of the citizenship to take the higher side of every political question. The gravest danger to American politics is indifference and ignorance of the practical workings of politics. Much has of late been said about the duty of going to the polls. But more is necessary than going to the polls. Most people

who do not vote feel they have nothing to vote for. Everything is cut and dried and it does not make any difference whether they vote or not. Something must be done before it is cut and dried. Christians must be taught how to go into political caucuses and ward meetings. High grade folks must be inspired to interest themselves in local politics and to secure places on delegations to national conventions. If the business of the Church is to make this a better world, then the preacher of the Church must learn the technique of how to get at the machinery of politics. No one is so ridiculous as a well-meaning, simple-minded Gospel preacher who utters high-sounding words on political reform, but is wholly and childishly impractical as to the ways of politicians. He is looked upon by practical men of affairs as farmers look upon a city man, who does not know how to hitch up a horse.

“Young man, your kind of people are all right at a prayer-meeting, but they’re no good at a caucus,” said the redoubtable Mark Hanna at the height of his power in the nineties to an earnest young worker in the prohibition cause in Ohio. Wayne B. Wheeler’s only answer was: “Well, we’ll see,” and a writer in the *New York World* is but one of many newspaper men to recall that Wheeler did see, and that he put the prohibitionists into caucuses and conventions and primary campaigns and State and national politics so effectively that they forced the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment, making prohibition a part of the fundamental law of the Republic.—*Literary Digest*, September, 1927.

The Church cannot be free and guiltless when democracy is in danger of dying. Are the people of today ignorant of political philosophy, then what has

the Church been doing at every cross-roads and chapel? Why have the great political sermons of the prophets of the Old Testament been neglected? Could not some time have been found to expound to the people the doctrines of government? Are the people indifferent to the suffrage? What has the preacher been doing with his opportunity? He has the largest audience in the world of serious-minded citizens listening to him year in and year out. Is it true that demagogues in newspaper headlines sway the public like the wind sways the weather-vane? Then what has been done by the religious schools that have had the first opportunity to ground the majority of Americans in true religious and political truth? Does propaganda determine the minds of most men for good or ill? Then the Church must throw aside its agelong conservatism, and come out and co-operate with the State in the teaching of the fundamentals of democracy. The Church must recognize once for all that there is no national problem which is not at bottom a religious problem. No free government can be maintained except by strict adherence to justice and integrity. The prophet of God, when preaching on the Kingdom of God, must make that kingdom inclusive of the government of men. He must be so grounded in the principles of statesmanship that a church attendant will be the best informed person on Civil Government as well as on missionary and spiritual strategy and world politics.

The good officials of the government should be made to feel that the Church is an ally for good government and an educator in civic righteousness. On the other hand, the corrupt politician should be made to fear the prophet-preacher as one who is ever ready to make

denunciations of corruption both in general and in particular. He who corrupts the sovereignty of the people must be made to tremble before the footstool of God. This kind of co-operation between the Church and the State, I believe, will save democracy for humanity.

IX

THE SOUL OF AMERICA

IN 1884 Emerson wrote, "Europe stretches to the Alleghenies, America lies beyond." Later somebody said, "Politics is the passion of Western men." Perhaps these two statements can be used to bound America geographically and to express America psychologically. This may help us in finding the soul of America.

Or, perhaps we had better take a moment for an intensive look at Lincoln's age in America. Certainly Lincoln was more than a politician. He was a statesman-prophet. He combined the spiritual and the secular, the Church and the State, in a way that has baffled the regular and orthodox writers. No one ever saw more clearly than Lincoln the spiritual nature of the State. No one so openly laid bare the soul of America.

Lincoln is one of the mysteries of history. Ancient moulds were not used in making him. Heredity and environment do not explain him. Political history did not produce him. So I am not going to make the mistake that so many biographers of Lincoln make. I am not going to try to make the rough pioneering age of Lincoln creative of the soul of Lincoln.

But it is quite another thing to try to picture the soul of America by depicting the struggles and aspirations and the religious life and the political and

social developments of that which lies beyond the Alleghenies. Finally, we shall try to show the finished product, a new nation with a vital, throbbing life of its own, a nation with a soul.

I am aware, of course, there are those who maintain that America has no soul. The French say that we are too young to have a soul, that we are childlike. The British say that we have not the rootings into the past, we are too much on the surface to have a soul. Some of the smart and European-minded Americans say that we lack the depths of culture that is necessary for a soul, that we are a mere amalgam or the product of an ugly melting-pot.

At the very beginning I maintain that Lincoln's America has a soul. And that this soul is vitally different from anything ever before produced in history, that this American soul is the most important factor in international and world life today. We have not become the richest and strongest nation on earth by mere accident. It is the natural result of the most creative life known in history.

"West of the Alleghenies," that's where the soul of America was produced. The Westernizing of the United States is the largest and most significant trek in the history of the migration of the races. Never before was such a large area of resourceful land settled by the same kind of people. Never before was there such a migration by a people with such high ideals, such idealism, and such dominant grandeur of character. Here we have something new in race education. And we ought to expect something new for civilization.

Yet while this is so, the American soul is perhaps the least understood even by us Americans. The inner life

of Greece and Rome has been interpreted faithfully. The soul of Egypt, even of ancient times, is better known than that of modern America. The ancients and the moderns of Asia, Europe, Africa, and even South America have a larger place in literature than "West of the Alleghenies." The reason for this is, of course, the very baffling nature of the American soul. Most Europeans who look in upon us give us up and go away scolding us for some minor lack of culture or something else that they cannot understand. We Americans are too close to ourselves to really understand our own soul. Therefore, we have an original and difficult task, when we try to picture the real soul of America.

Personally, I feel that the soul of America can best be photographed through the lenses of the soul of Abraham Lincoln. I shall at least try to set Lincoln into the centre of the picture and I believe it will illuminate and interpret the American soul to the thinker who is honestly trying to understand American civilization. If it be true that the interplay of heredity and environment, the struggles and the hopes and achievements of a people are the "high priests that solemnly anoint and enthrone the prophets of an age," then it is equally true that the heroes of a people help to make the outlines of the soul. They put in the shadows and the lights by which we can read the heart and the life and the spirit of any people.

Carl Sanborg's Lincoln is the Lincoln of modern realism. He rescues Lincoln from the shadowland. He brings him home from captivity and myth. You see Lincoln in reality and it is very interesting and helpful to read modern books on Lincoln to one who wants to find his soul, but modern realism only gives

the photograph of Lincoln. Lincoln now needs to be X-Rayed for us. I am looking for some Carl Sanborg to come forth with a deeper picture of Abraham Lincoln, which will show us clearly the mysteries of Americanism.

Eighteen hundred and nine was a most significant moment in history. It was the year of great men. It was one of the big heartbeats of world history. God's angels then took the first step in the new world upheaval. Let us look intensely at this episode in creation. To see it best we must see the period from 1809 to 1861 in one moment, in one grasp of thought. Will you see it with me in one moment—the Kentucky background—the nobility of parentage—the heroes of Daniel Boone's day—the elemental living in the wilds, the crude life, the lack of culture, the hardships, whiskey, fights, sickness, starvation—terrible wrestling with nature that always brings out the soul—the Indians—the river trips—the struggle for books—the struggle to choose a career—the surveyor—the lawyer—Lincoln's courtship, death and sorrow, seeming utter failure of life—the politics of the day, the debates, humour and pathos in his oratory—a disturbed country—the rise to great moral heights—the presidency—the war and the assassin's bullet—that's Lincoln. All of us who study biography know this Lincoln. But the soul of Lincoln still baffles us. We must strike deeper.

Let me give three spiritual X-Ray pictures of the soul of America "West of the Alleghenies," which I think will give us a better understanding of Lincoln's America.

First, I believe that the soul of America can be X-ographed in the pathos and melancholy and sorrow

and mystic humour of Lincoln. It was said of Lincoln's mother that she kept in silence behind those grey eyes more beliefs than she spoke, and that so much of what she believed and lived for was yonder, ever yonder. I think exactly the same statement would fit Abraham Lincoln. Six months after the death of his mother he brought Parson Elkins to preach the funeral sermon. After the service he threw himself passionately on his mother's grave. Now, that's American sorrow. No other nation, not even the Hebrews, developed the depths of soul and capacity of sorrow that we find here in America. These deeper mystic relationships with the Eternal are peculiarly American. The moods of nature and of God are mystic. These folks of the pioneer days were close to God.

The comic outline of Abraham Lincoln as we see it in American history silhouetted against the dawning new day is that of Lincoln walking fifty miles for books, or swinging his arms in awkwardness, with coon-skin cap and trousers too short, debating or telling stories.

But when we look deeper into Americanism and the real life of Lincoln we see him even at the age of eleven with long spells of abstraction. It was said of him that when he attended socials and parties he was a thousand miles away. He seemed to dip far into the future while others made merry with the day. "Blues and multiple coils of melancholies" overtook him time and time again until the end. All that Handel and Schopenhauer uttered in foiled hopes were personified in Lincoln. His soul was always the real battlefield of the Civil War. He said that if his grief could be evenly spread out to all the people of America there would not be one happy person in the country.

The other side that we see in this picture of the American soul through the lense of Lincoln's soul is a radiant wit and humour that you do not find anywhere else in the world. Lincoln's grief was interfountained with rippling laughter and mirth. "God set up his soul with batteries of laughter." This admixture of melancholy and mirth is my first snap-shot or X-ograph of the American soul. And it is just this that utterly baffles European literature and European-minded Americans. A poet in England once told me that the thing he could not understand about an American audience was that in one minute they could weep and the next minute they could be convulsed with laughter.

This strange element in the American soul helps us to explain Lincoln's oratory which even the Europeans now admit is equal in greatness to that of Demosthenes. Lincoln's oratory is so simple and yet so tantalizingly complex. It is impressionable beyond compare with large spots of pathos and ever-changing lights and comic situations. He stands there loose-jointed, a sort of combination of Jiggs, Mutt and Jeff, and Andy Gump. He uses the street slang and a dialect from the corner grocery and yet transcendently writes the Gettysburg Address. In his transcendent moments there is in him a strange far-offness as solemn as death. He is truly a world paradox. With his funny stories he is so simple and so easy to understand and yet he is unearthly and ethereal, when his eyes show the shadows of the Gethsemanes that he has been through.

Then, secondly, I believe that the soul of America can be X-ographed by an intensive study of the deeper elements of American religion as we see it interpreted

in the life of Abraham Lincoln. I suppose nothing more puzzles the average European writer than the religion of America.

Lincoln was reared in a time of tumultuous religious upheaval. It was a day when preaching was severely direct and simple. The preacher said, "Confess your sins," and their sins were many. Drinking, gambling, loafing, fighting,—these were the sins denounced in Lincoln's hearing. Then the preacher said, "Seek salvation, accept free salvation, be decent, stop your meanness." The ethical side of religion was emphasized. Heaven and hell were great material realities. The camp-meeting was the great annual religious round-up. Emotionalism was the driving force. It gave an outlet for pent-up feelings and unrealized hopes and longings.

Lincoln being reared in the solitude of the wilderness within hearing of nature, near the thunderings of God, and the whisperings of creation, became very sensitive. He heard voices, he believed in dreams, he saw things. He never long remained on the surface of any questions. When he saw the rocks of geology he saw deeper into the meaning of creation. He saw more than gravitation in the swinging of the planets. He saw more than mere protoplasm in the source of life. He had the very marks of the deepest religious prophets. He was so directly spiritual that he clashed with some of the crude dogmas of his day. Some misunderstood him and thought he was an unbeliever. But every speech and every proclamation marks him as a man, who leans constantly on the Almighty. No speech of modern statesmen uses the language of religion more intelligently and more profusely than that of the Second Inaugural Address.

To me his religious life was almost uncanny, in that it was far ahead of his day and like that which we find in the best and broadest and most tolerant in American religious life today.

Perhaps we can see the religious life of America and that of Lincoln in his pardon cases to the best advantage. During the war President Lincoln had to pass on thirty thousand court-martial cases. He pardoned just as many men as he could. Lincoln wrote on one case: "This life is too precious to be lost." On another case he displayed a bit of humour when he wrote across the paper, "If this man had more than one life, I think a little hanging would do him good." On another case he wrote, "We will not hang this young private, it would scare him to death." The very heart-life of religious America in its deepest mercy and kindness is certainly exemplified in Lincoln's wonderful mercy.

Then, in the third place, I believe the distinctive element in the American soul is that of moral grandeur. It is certainly strange that this land of pioneers and terrible struggle should outreach all other peoples in moral achievements. This element is recognized in literature but it is very little understood.

What a setting there was in America in 1850 for the dramatization of moral grandeur! There was the far-stretching nation with room for adventure and unheard of opportunity for greed and gain. There was back of it the cultured East and beyond it the unknown West. Right in the centre of this drama stand the slave driver, the slave breeder, and the plantation owners. There was a host who profited by the status quo. There were the mighty commercial interests that put money and finance before right. Property rights came

before personal rights. On this stage of 1850 enters a new prophet, Abraham Lincoln. Behind him is a host of the preachers of righteousness ready to die for the principle that government must not perish from this earth.

The subject of this national drama was the contest between human rights and property rights. Abraham Lincoln stood up in it as the master-mind of the day. His strength was his moral grandeur. He took the stand that slavery was morally wrong. This was always Abraham Lincoln's mightiness. The audience of this drama always felt that Abraham Lincoln was in the toils of something more than personal ambition.

This is simple to us now. We all recognize that human slavery is a moral wrong. It was, however, not so simple in Lincoln's day. Many good people saw no wrong in slavery. Many others had their moral judgments distorted by financial gain. Had it not been for the fact that the American soul was peculiarly susceptible to moral heights, the audience would never have lifted Abraham Lincoln to victory.

This moral grandeur of the American soul has been manifested again and again in American life. Take, for example, the struggle with the liquor traffic. Only the weaker forces were at first arrayed against the terrible evils of alcoholism. Any keen observer from Europe twenty-five years ago would have scoffed at the possibility of turning out hundreds of thousands of saloons by the mandate of the people. Even now Europeans and European-minded Americans fail to see anything but fanaticism in the abolition of the saloon. They utterly misread the American soul which has an unbelievable capacity for moral achievements. They who hope for the return of the American saloon utterly

fail to grasp the tenacity and the grandeur of the inner American life. Just as soon as America realized that the debauching of men by legalized temptation was wrong, then the doom of the liquor traffic was struck.

Literature in Europe and America has been fond of picturing the Americanization process as a huge ugly melting-pot into which the rubbish of the nations were being cast and melted down to a nondescript amalgam without personality or character. No picture is more untrue. No story does more violence to facts.

While in Budapest in a beautiful park, talking with the grand old woman of Hungary, Miss Augusta Rosenberg, we came suddenly in the turn of the path upon a statue of Abraham Lincoln. Imagine my emotions upon seeing this statue in the disturbed war-torn Balkans. I said, "Quick, translate the inscription for me." She said in good English, "The inscription reads: The Emancipator of Mankind." That Lincoln was not the product of the melting-pot. There is something new, something out of God's great blue.

If we must picture to ourselves the American process, let us call it a social laboratory. Let us call it God's own experimentation in democracy. Nowhere on earth had God a chance like this before. Here we had the possibility of fresh series of experiments in self-government. Here the binding conventionalities of the kings could be broken with liberty. Here was a daring born of pioneering. Here was enough poverty and struggle to develop an inner resistance. Here were enough of open boundless possibilities to feed the soul on hope. Here came the New England Puritans, the Maryland Cavaliers, the Scotch Presbyterians of the Carolinas, the Roman Catholics, the Methodists, and

the Baptists from everywhere. These were all elements that refused to be melted down. No, this was not a melting-pot. It was a national test-tube containing violent, spurting, volcanic, elemental, creative elements that combined, but did not melt and finally formed the soul of America.

Professor Becker, of Cornell, says, "There is no fundamental characterists of an imperial race that America has not developed. The West has produced the restless energy and inventive resourcefulness, a flexibility of mind, a human tolerance, and a genial acceptance of good and ill, which form the basis of our character."

Nothing that transpires in America today can be understood by one who utterly fails to understand the heart-life and the soul-life of America. This knowledge of the inner life and the history of the processes that made America gives one great confidence in the essential sanity and goodness of present-day America. We are not the melting-pot of the East. We are the product of God's laboratory in the West. This gives me confidence in the direction of American life. It makes me an optimist for the permanence of our form of government. It is not a mere matter of the day. It is rooted into the heart of a great people. I believe it will stand the test of the jazzy, cheap, and vicious moments that cloud our vision. "Main Street" America is right at heart. And our churches and pastors surely will take up the task of feeding the great soul of a nation. With the rich heritage of our heroic history and with the preaching of the colonial fathers in our blood and the achievement of constitutional government and the Gethsemane of Civil War as the warp and woof of our soul, we surely now can and will master

modern democracy and repudiate every inroad on the freedom of American citizens. We will achieve a still richer soul for America.

X

LIBERALISM AND STATES' RIGHTS

"Liberalism, as Mr. Butler describes it, means withholding from Government each and every power and function which can possibly be performed to the general advantage in the field of liberty—why, then, as Mr. Butler asks, is liberalism in eclipse,—both at home and abroad? I do not know. I guess that the old-fashioned liberalism impresses people as reactionary, as a council of despair, as negative in its promises, and inadequate to its problems—as soon as laissez-faire liberalism, as freedom to do as one likes, seems not to end in happiness but in starvation, unemployment and overpopulation, people look for a political ideal, containing a more meritorious substance than freedom to do as you please.

"I guess the time is coming when Government will inevitably be more involved in our private welfare and our private happiness than it is now."—The Main Stream, STUART SHERMAN. (Quoted by permission of Columbia University Press.)

OUR native aristocracy has united with our foreign-born proletariat to swat the Eighteenth Amendment. This is certainly a most interesting uniting of forces. A propaganda is being carried on which seems like cheap nullification of law for the sake of personal appetite. The native aristocracy, to ease conscience and to make things look more respectable, are dragging out discredited and worn-out theories of government. Just now liberalism is much in vogue in fashionable parlour circles, and we hear it from street corner orators. It is claimed with great fervency and assumed patriotism that we have departed from the democracy

of Jefferson and the founders of our Republic. They tell us that we are setting up a super-government at Washington with powers over private affairs and over personal appetite which will become intolerable. President Butler, of Columbia University, has become so concerned over the autocratic tendencies of democracy that he has found it necessary to write a book, *The Faith of a Liberal*. He thinks that we have drifted far from the Emancipation Proclamation.

The late Stuart Sherman, of the same university, wrote a delightful and penetrative analysis of the shortcomings of political liberalism. He calls attention to the political philosophy of Butler and then he says, "I guess the most formidable foes of liberalism today are not the Socialists, but the crying necessities of modern states and the terrible interdependence of all parts of modern society."

The doctrine of liberalism in politics, if carried out to its logical conclusion, would say with Thoreau that government is best which governs not at all. Nothing should be done, they claim, by the government that can possibly be done by other agencies. But this is just the opposite of democracy. Democracy stands for efficiency in government, and in doing all that can be done in a co-operative way for humanity. There can be no limit to the functioning of a government by the people. The people may do as much or as little through government as they please. Do they want to build a bridge across a river? They can do so through the government, or if they think best the government can let private interests span the river. Do they want to forbid the use of narcotics? They can, it is the business of the people to decide. Do they want to stop the agelong debauchery caused by the commercialized

traffic in alcohol? That, also, is up to the people. No one can now rise up and say effectively that we have not the right to do as we please about these questions. Old worn-out political theories dressed up new as great philosophies will not scare practical Americans. I believe liberalism is merely a negative doctrine with no positive help for the ills of today and is hopelessly crying into the night of the past.

Life today is so terribly interdependent, we are so much members of one another, modern society is so swift and so complex and so destructively dynamic, that to revive eighteenth century doctrines for our guidance now seems like utter political folly. We do not need less government. Surely our need will be for more government. We are not heading towards states' rights and county rights, but we are working fast towards federal rights and, perhaps, international rights. More and more it will be necessary, as Dr. Sherman points out, to interfere with our meat, milk and water. We cannot even allow people to drink contaminated water any more. We cannot drive our automobile as we please. Control of the air for the flying ships is in prospect. The individual is not safe today. The community cannot be happy without close democratic supervision over all life.

But while this is true and inevitable and while the liberals in politics are fighting a dying cause and government must more and more touch our lives intimately and drastically, we must hasten to say that all this makes it a thousand times more necessary to have the *right kind* of government. It did not make so much difference what kind of government we had a thousand years ago. The people could go on a year at a time without knowing there was a national government.

But today to have a selfish, grafting, corrupt and unjust government would become intolerable. A great federal democracy must be motivated and driven by great Christian ideals. It must become the consuming concern of Christian statesmen that the State shall learn how to govern unselfishly and with an equitable concern for all people, high or low, rich or poor.

Take, for example, the liquor traffic. We tried every method of control. We taught temperance, we preached that the individual must control himself, but with all our preaching to individuals we found that some of our best citizens became the victims of alcoholism. Outside of government control the liquor traffic got so despicable that the saloon became the hang-out of the criminals of the world. Detective agencies worked almost exclusively in connection with saloons. The traffic was then joined to an international business in the chastity of women. Then, to add insult to injury, the saloon began to try to control the government. The most infamous kind of politics was always concocted in the old saloon. It is difficult to tell the new generation the intolerable arrogance and the abysmal sordidness of the business that made and sold intoxicating drink. It was in pure self-defence that our people exercised the right of democratic government and asked to be protected from a business from which individuals could not defend themselves. The American people were up against something more real than the swivel-chair theories of impractical political philosophers. We simply had to do something to maintain America on the upward grade of high and Christian living.

Much in the same way and in the same manner that liberalism has been called into service against the

Eighteenth Amendment, so has the old states' rights idea been resurrected from the political grave of the past. It has been used effectively to help kill our enthusiasm for federal control over the passion for alcohol. Again we find that the modern tendency of government is against states' rights. The Federal Government is extending to the farmers every service in the way of agricultural schools and the furnishing of information to solve the problems of the farmer. We have federal inspection of food. We have the Dyer Act, covering the theft of automobiles. Our Government is helping to check the ravages of the boll weevil. It seems to be good business for the Federal Government to help farmers stamp out hog cholera. It was impossible for the States to handle the rates on railroads, so that business passed to a federal board. The Mann Act prevents the inter-state traffic in women. The Narcotic Act had to be projected by the Federal Government, and so on and on. Hundreds of matters that intimately concern our everyday life have become the concern of the nation. It seems to me now rather belated to ask for State control of the liquor traffic.

State lines are more and more becoming imaginary lines. America is one great sovereign nation. We travel from State to State without passport or custom duty. We scarcely know any more when we pass from one State to another. In America we see the same movies, we speak the same language, we eat the same nationally advertised products, the same baseball series stirs the nation from coast to coast. We are one nation. We are only conscious of being Americans.

As practical Americans, we see that we need more federal control rather than less. Who is there who would not welcome a federal divorce law, for example?

Is it not absurd for the States severally to deal with this problem? What tourists would not welcome uniform federal automobile laws? The great caravan creeping or dashing over this great land of ours from State to State has certainly helped to make us nationally minded, and we are beginning to crave for more standards that are national in scope. In calling for State control of the liquor traffic it seems to me the "wets" are flying in the face of this general tide towards the federalizing of all life. Would it not be absolutely absurd to have to guard the boundary lines of forty-eight States? No one, who is a friend of sobriety and temperance, could ever ask seriously for State control.

This little tempest over theories of political government that is being carried on so briskly in liberal circles today again convinces me of the need of the prophet of God to be grounded in the eternal truths of government. Political fallacies are apt to appear at any time. There is need now to instruct the Christian multitudes. An uninstructed, emotional mob can never sustain an ordered government by the people. As life becomes more and more complex, government will need to co-operate more and more with private agencies and with individuals. I believe that a greater and more efficient civilization is possible only as we become wise enough to use more free government.

Certainly the Church, which exists for folks and for civilization, cannot but be a leader in this great movement for more government and better government.

XI

REFORMS THAT BECAME LAW

LECKY, in his *History of European Morals*, points out that the Church has covered the globe with countless institutions of mercy unknown to the pagan world. It has indissolubly linked goodness with benevolence. It has placed in every community a minister whose duty is charity.

Gifford Gordon has stated equally well that the Church has, during the past decade or two, become more active in practical righteousness than ever before. The leaders of the Church are marked for their national and international thinking. A conference of ministers compares most favourably with any legislative body in its high-class discussion of political subjects. The Church now, as never before, challenges wrong economic doctrine. For example, the twelve-hour day of the steel industry was so effectively denounced by the Church that never again will men slave twelve hours a day, seven days a week, for a living in America. It is this boldness of the outstanding leaders of the Church that is causing the cry from certain quarters that the Church is too much interested in the affairs of the world.

Christianity at its best has always been a fighting religion. It always makes war on evil. The history of Christianity might be written by chronicling the achievement of one moral reform after the other. This

would be a most impressive story. If St. Paul were to awaken in America today, he would be more astonished than Rip Van Winkle. The achievement of moral reform during the past two thousand years speaks for the final victory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ among men.

It is also interesting to note that reforms start first with the Church. The Church notices some immoral practice. It is termed sin. This sin is preached against from the pulpit, perhaps for a hundred years. Then the community takes it up and later on it becomes a national question. Finally, after great agitation and education, this sin is forbidden by law. One reform after the other has become the law of the land.

And this must always be so. Christianity can never be tolerant to evil. Christ's influence on men is to make them preachers of righteousness, reformers, and martyrs. The biography of the great historical Christian personalities is one of battles for humanity. Later on that for which they fought becomes the law of the land. Blackstone, in reviewing the history of Christianity, says, "Christian civilization is the sum total of results achieved through the continuous battle between Christianity and paganism." And this battle must go on today. Paganism is still here. It crops out in personal sin, industrial injustice, and political graft. Modern times are, of course, infinitely more Christianized than that of the Middle Ages, for example. We would not tolerate for a minute some of the practices of one hundred years ago. We have advanced, but that is not enough. We must become more and more Christian. The strain and stress of modern life is such that we cannot stand sin and injustice. Our young people are better today than ever before.

But that is not enough. They must be much better than they ever were before, to stand the strain and the temptations of this day.

Dr. Clarence True Wilson has in a fine way pointed out that the march of Christ upon the centuries has one by one done away with barbaric practices. Crucifixion has been stopped as a mode of punishment. Gladiatorial exhibitions where human lives were sacrificed for the amusement of the populace has been wiped off the human slate. Human slavery is a thing of the past. The captives of war have been protected from the execrations that were heaped upon them. We do not countenance any more wars of conquest. Prison abuses have been reformed, and we now nurse the sick in public hospitals, we care for the aged, the insane and the blind, and the orphan is sheltered and nourished.

Dr. Wilson further points out that cruelties have been stopped, vile passions curbed, and suicide has been branded as a wrong for both worlds. The almost universal and detestable infanticide has been punished and suppressed. The shamelessness of heathenism and idol worship have been driven into dark oblivion. An impressive list of the wrongs overcome by the instigation of the Church might be made as follows:

Piracy upon the high seas stopped.

The African slave trade forbidden.

Duelling outlawed.

Polygamy discontinued.

Cannibalism abolished.

The lottery systems overthrown.

Gambling put under condemnation.

American slaves emancipated.

The opium traffic internationally banned.

Narcotics being ferreted out of the United States.

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I have pointed out in a previous chapter how Christian theology made slavery illogical, and how the great revival movements of the seventeenth century made slavery forever impossible in Europe. It would be an interesting research to trace to the last possible source the influence of the Church in abolishing slavery in America. Rev. George D. Armstrong, a pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Norfolk, Virginia, on November 27, 1856, preached a sermon on "Politics in the Pulpit," and made such an impression that the sermon was published in pamphlet form. In this pamphlet he makes a strong plea that the pulpit stay out of all political discussion. He says some evils are not the concern of the Church. They are purely the concern of the State.

Then he goes on to say that the ministry is set aside for holy things and urges St. Paul's advice, "Give himself wholly to them." But he says that if he must enter the political arena let him remember that it is as a citizen and he must not wear the livery of the Court of Heaven, but put on the livery of Cæsar. Then, in a peculiarly naïve way, he forgets his theory and plunges into a whole hour of political discussion in defense of slavery. He denounces with all his powers the anti-slavery preaching, which he says is going on in every pulpit of the north. This illogical sermon finally comes to a triumphant end with this paragraph, "The Church, by God's appointment, has nothing to do with the strife and political agitation of the day. The range of operation of the Church is higher, far above the storms which gather and range on the earth's surface. They cannot even cast a shadow upon the sunlit field which God has assigned her, which is heaven."

This sermon indicates the tremendous agitation

which was on in the Church before the Civil War. There is no doubt in my mind that the background of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and other mighty pronouncements against slavery can be found in the sermons of leading preachers of the day.

However, the most outstanding moral reform that has become law is prohibition. No reform has taken a longer time. No evil was more deeply entrenched in the lives of the people. No evil was so heavily financed. Prohibition was not put over when the people were asleep. Every foot of ground was won with a desperate battle. *The Christian Science Monitor* has made a brief but accurate summary of the long prohibition war as follows:

“For generations before prohibition became a law, there had been agitation looking to the curtailment of the liquor traffic. ‘Temperance’ was the motto of innumerable societies. Frances Willard headed a movement of the Christian women of the country. The great Women’s Christian Temperance Union spread into every state, into the hamlet as well as into the city. Locally and nationally crusades were undertaken to exterminate the drink evil. Gradually it became evident to many persons interested in the question that there was no way to make the movement effective except by legislation.

“The Good Templars originally proposed organization of political leagues for the support of party candidates who are out-and-out prohibitionists. At Oberlin, Ohio, in 1893, the first Anti-Saloon League was organized on the basis of this policy.

“The National Anti-Saloon League, with headquarters at Washington, D. C., was organized two years later. It was interdenominational and non-partisan.

“From 1895 to 1912 the record of practically every year showed an increase in dry territory. In 1913 the league

adopted the proposal for a national prohibition amendment which had been first recommended in 1876 by the Prohibition party.

"The House of Representatives, on December 17, 1917, voted by 282 to 128 and the Senate on the following day by 65 to 20 to submit to the legislatures of all the States for rejection or acceptance the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which provided:

"1. After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

"2. The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this Article by appropriate legislation.

"3. This Article shall be unoperative until it shall have been ratified as an Amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several States, as provided by the Constitution, within seven years of the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress."

This achievement has been termed by Herbert Hoover as the greatest social experiment of many ages. For our purpose we can also term it as the best example of Church co-operation with government in achieving a high end for humanity.

I was riding through Germany in company with the manager of a large steel company. We got to talking about American prohibition. He said that Germany will also be driven to prohibition by economic forces. He said that they are beginning to work for curtailment of alcoholism in Germany. When asked about the prospect of a dry Germany he made this comment, "I understand that in America the churches co-

operated with industry and with business in securing national prohibition. In Germany the churches are not co-operating with us. I wonder why that is so? Are the churches here dead to the terrible ravages of alcohol?" I thought it rather pathetic to hear this business man tell of the lack of Church interest in prohibition.

It was, of course, not without much misgiving that the churches in America took interest in the legislative side of temperance reform. For example, the Old School Presbyterian Church said, in 1856, "The temperance reform is gradually assuming a new and we hope and more effective form—the civil aspect of the subject claiming the attention of legislative bodies, and its moral and religious bearings the attention of the Church."—Quoted from *Current History* by MARK MOHLER.

The Congregational churches, in 1865, expressed thankfulness for the aid of legislation in temperance reform, but hastened to say that the main reliance must be on moral and spiritual measures. Gradually, however, the churches came to see that the liquor traffic was a menace to the whole social organization, threatening even the success of the spiritual work of the Church. The churches at last came to look upon prohibition as a fundamentally religious question, which can only be finally solved by legislative act.

Notably clear and statesmanlike are the pronouncements for State and national prohibition by the General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church. As early as 1868 the General Conference said, "We hail every legal measure to effectively restrain and extirpate this chief crime against society and trust that the law of prohibition may yet be the enactment

of every State and of the National Congress." In 1876 the General Conference said, "We will continue the struggle, until total, legal prohibition shall become the undisputed and settled policy of the whole earth."

But not only on this question but on all questions affecting the moral life of the people have the various Church Conferences come out boldly. This is particularly so during the last decade. A good example of the high stand of the Church is that of a recent expression of the Rock River Conference of Methodist ministers. They expressed themselves as against the training of reserve officers. They were in favour of farm relief, collective bargaining and the eight-hour day for women. They said that American investors and their investments in foreign lands should be subject to an impartial administration of the laws of the land wherever they elect to reside or make investments. They protested against the military occupation of any portions of Latin America or the Asiatic Continent. They also expressed themselves in favour of Federal legislation against child labour.

It is a conservative statement and altogether within the limits of truth to say that, had it not been for the Church and government co-operation, the many evils, abolished by religion, education and law, would still be hampering humanity and destroying civilization.

XII

EMPTY PEWS

"But if that was Christianity as it manifested itself in its purity near the fountainhead, I wonder sometimes whether we have ever seen any of it. The Christianity with which we are familiar is not a charge; it is not an attack; it is a respectability, and sometimes a retreat. There is little or nothing that is soldierly about it. It sings battle songs, but it does not battle. It keeps its warfare in the hymn-book and in the theological mess room. The Christianity familiar to us is a pleasant Sabbath day narcotic; a Sunday program set to music and spaced off with a little prayer and a little speech, an hour or two of droning and drowsing, with no more suggestion of battle than a still, dreamy morning suggests a terrific hurricane among the mountains. What we want now in religion is silken slippers and cushioned chair arrangements, and sweet and pretty musings and mouthings about nothing. Nobody must be hurt. Nobody's conscience must be disturbed. Nobody's hobbies must be interfered with. Nobody's fads must be punctured and emptied of wind. Nobody's principles must be condemned. Let us be charitable, even toward the devil."—The Reformed Church Pulpit, REV. FREDERICK K. STAMM.

EMPTY pews! Echoing wooden pews! The nightmare of the preacher, the despair of Church boards, profitable copy for some magazine writers, an economic waste. Some say it is the tendency of our day. The symbol of irresponsibility of a moving-picture mentality. Christ crucified afresh on hard, wooden, empty church pews! Yards of them, miles of them, front pews, middle pews, crying up to God for fearless prophets to fill them.

I was one day taken up a very high building in New York City. The building was in the midst of the Towers of Babel of America. An earnest and serious Christian man, who had prospered greatly with the prosperity of the city, took me up to the roof of this high building which he owned. He took me to the east. "What do you see?" he said. "What do I see? I see canyons of finance." He took me to the west and again said, "Look at it, look at it, what do you see?" "I see great cathedrals of commerce. I see buildings that would accommodate the population of a goodly city. Way down below I see black crowds of crowding, rushing people." Then he took me to the north and to the south. "What do you see, what do you see; do you see God anywhere?" And I saw a city that had not only empty pews, but a city that had crowded the Church out. From that big building I could see no temples. The church spires were choked out. The skyscrapers had covered them up. That black crowd down below was not thinking of the Church. Business and pleasure had crowded religion out of their lives. They were just rushing, God knows where.

Then this wealthy disciple of Christ unburdened his soul to me and said, "When I was a boy in a little town up in New York State the church building was the highest structure in the place. It was the most expensive building anywhere around. The church was always filled on Sunday, for everybody went to church. The teachings of the church gave us the integrity, honesty, and character on which we business men have been building the great American superstructure. Now we see crowds elbowing by the church. With sad hearts we now look at long rows of empty pews. The

church is no longer the highest and most expensive building in the city. Now some of us are beginning to wonder whether our great financial structure is safe without the old foundations of honesty and Christian character. There are indications that we are not safe, and we are beginning to wonder whether we must not put the church spire back into the skyline of the city. In the skyline of early New York the church spire had a prominent place. Today this forest of skyscrapers has buried the church out of sight. Out of sight, out of mind. I feel with many others that we must bring the church back arrestingly to the attention of millions who have almost forgotten its existence. And then we must keep the church open every day and every night."

This Christian layman, who controlled a dozen corporations, saw the problem of the Church from a special angle and from the high towers of the richest city of history. He would propose to tackle the Church problem by the same methods that he would reorganize and unite a dozen dying industries into one great dividend-paying corporation. He thinks in "billions," and sees visions of fifty-story church towers dominating the cathedrals of commerce. All honour to the leaders of industry who are becoming interested in the problem of empty pews and godless cities. But I feel we must go deeper into the problem or we will be due for terrible disappointment. The problem is more than a matter of buildings.

Dean Inge, who is internationally known for his gloom, says that the history of religion has usually been the history of decline. I wonder what he means by that? Does he mean that Christianity is a spent force? Is it possible that our prophetic message to

humanity has been spoken and is done? Must we linger on and worry about empty pews and try to conserve the moralities that we have with a dying sacerdotalism, and finally give away to some new and vital force for the regeneration of human civilization?

The language used by the friends of the Church, as well as by its enemies, seem to me rather foreboding. The very phrases and sentences are serious to look at. Let us give some of the most well-worn phrases regarding the Church: "loosing its grip on adolescent youth;" "ceaseless drift away from organized religion;" "only eighteen per cent of rural population belong to church;" "the minister preaches to empty pews, subsists on meagre funds from Home Missionary Boards, while his erstwhile disciples immerse themselves in the radio or the moving-picture, or gallivant about the country in automobiles;" "the dwindling influence of the ministry;" "Protestantism in eclipse;" "the problem of the evening service."

The fact that language like the above is current in our conversation regarding the Church has some significance in itself. There are those, of course, who have the grave-clothes of the Church ready for burial at any time. Then there are others who say that the Church is more vital than ever before. They use statistics to show that the total membership of the Church is outstripping the population and that church attendance is greater as a whole than in any previous age. In all this mass of conflicting evidence, what is the real truth? What is the true status of the Church in the life of the people? Does church attendance signify much in the lives of the people? Do the people go from the pew to live Christ among men?

During the past three years I have had an unusual

opportunity of observation as a general church worker, speaking in two hundred churches on Sundays from coast to coast. I have visited rural churches, city churches, big and small, churches in industrial populations, suburbs and small town churches. I believe I have observed a fair cross-section of Main Street American Christianity. I find that the ordinary church usually has seating capacity for little more than one-third of the membership of the church. Here, say, is a church of nine hundred members on the rolls. If three hundred people attend this church on a Sunday morning, the people will brag about it and tell me what a wonderful crowd they had. The three hundred people will seem to the average observer to be a congregation of six hundred. I find, though, that a church of this kind will on the average have from one to two hundred people present on a Sunday morning. The evening service will be in all probability too much of a heartbreak to count at all. Countless small town and country services are held with from six to sixty present. There are, of course, notable exceptions to this rule, and the exceptions are the hope of Christianity. The church pews can be filled with an eager and expectant people.

Charles E. Schaeffer, in the *Reformed Church Pulpit*, makes a clear and conservative observation, with which I believe most informed Christians will agree. "Church work is definitely harder than it was a quarter century or even a decade ago. The jazz age, the craze for pleasure, the automobile and the radio, the practical unbelief of the people, the loss of a sense of sin and the corresponding lack of a sense of the need of a Saviour are foreboding, to say the least."

Have we ever gone really to the bottom of this ques-

tion? Why have we empty pews? Why does the multitude pass by? The explanations seem to me to be skimming the surface. "The scientific spirit is keeping away the masses." But that is not true. There is mighty little scientific spirit in possession of the average picture-show multitude. "Modern behaviouristic psychology has ruled God out of life." But I find the common people do believe in God. Most of them have not so much as heard of the new psychology. Some of it may have trickled down to them through novels, comic strips, and moving-pictures. Not enough of the new science, however, or the new psychology or of realism has come to the people to affect their church attendance. Something else is keeping the masses out of the Church.

People ought to attend church more than ever. With all the new wonders of science, the finer interpretations of truth, better church buildings, more educated pastors, more leisure to attend church, more money and more human interests, more heartaches and more problems, there ought to be more people attending church than ever. The multitudes ought to crowd the church. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is so necessary to our war-sick, sin-sick world that it ought to be heralded in such mighty power that the nations repent. Then why are we hesitating, why are we halting, why are we timid and uninteresting? Why are preachers reading dry essays in the pulpit? Why has the fire burned out?

Secular and atheistic critics of the Church seem to know positively why the Church has empty pews. It is because we have abandoned the simple Gospel. They say the Church has become too much interested in politics and the practical affairs of the world. That

this is untrue as far as Protestantism is concerned has been well stated by Dr. S. Parkes Cadman in the *Forum Magazine*:

“As President of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, I am reminded daily of the incurable individualism of my fellow Protestants, concerning questions relating to politics alone. They have little or no collective interest in these and they would quickly resent any attempt to commandeer them for such an interest. Even with reference to the vexed question of Prohibition, on which, in contrast with other issues, Protestants recently achieved a high degree of practical co-operation, they manifest considerable difference of opinion. Ardent supporters of the Eighteenth Amendment inveigh daily against the lethargy and inefficiency of the opposition of Protestantism to the illicit liquor traffic. This attitude is not due, in my judgment, to any marked change in the convictions of the majority of Protestant churchmen, but to a reassertion of their traditional reluctance to participate directly in political conflicts. The Church agencies that engage aggressively in such conflicts are the exceptions, not the rule, and any behaviour of this sort is deprecated by the general body of Protestants.

“The constant charge that churchmen meddle mischievously in politics emanates from well known groups, which for various reasons fear religious intervention in the realms of social justice, national integrity, lawfulness, and international good will.”

At other times and in different connections the same secular critics tell us that the Church is too impractical and too otherworldly. They say that the Church is dealing too much in abstract theology and in matters that concern not the people. Of course, these opposite contentions cannot be true. There are denominations

that concern themselves almost exclusively with abstract theology and other worldly subjects. If anything, the pews of those denominations are emptier. Observation and research convinces me that there is nothing to these various secular explanations of Church losses.

Then there are earnest Christians who claim the pew is empty, because the Church is no longer spiritual. We are told that the pulpit should ring out on sin, repentance, the cross and the blood of Christ, and then the multitudes would come to church. We have very assertive associations of Christians who tell us that the reason for the empty pew is loss of faith in the great fundamentals of religion. If we emphasize the virgin birth of Jesus, the physical resurrection of Christ, the second coming and many other theological assertions, then there would be no church attendance problem. This cannot be true, for church attendance started to dwindle under just this kind of preaching. The old-fashioned preaching had the right way and was undisputed. The new type of preaching has come only with much reluctance and heart agony. The multitudes that did not come have driven us to it. Furthermore, I have made observation that the churches that do preach the old fundamentals in the old way are no better filled than the modern churches.

Observations like these led me to make an original survey among non-church attending people. Over a period of several years I have interviewed one thousand people who do not attend church regularly. Some of these were rather sympathetic with the Church. Others were opposed to the Church. Most of them believed in God. These people were in three States, one in the east, one in the middle west, and one in the

far west. I asked why they did not attend church regularly. I found very few people who complained of lack of spirituality in the Church. They did not say that they wanted the Church to emphasize theological fundamentals. These people told me that they were ashamed that they did not attend church. They knew they ought to attend. But when I got closer to the real reason for not attending they would usually say to me, "We have real problems. Modern life is terrific to such as we are. Sometimes we do not know where to turn. The Church, however, does not seem to understand us. We go to church and we hear about Noah and Moses and vague explanations of religious theories and we fall asleep under it. The Church is not interesting. We need somebody who will explain to us politics, finance, social life, and personal life. We need somebody who will explain to us the danger of sin as we find it in modern life. We are longing for a warless world, but we do not feel that the Church has any voice in international politics. We don't find what we need in the Church."

Now, this was in effect the composite answer of a thousand people, ordinary people, poor people, the general run of people in our land. Yes, these people would attend church provided something practical and humanly interesting were going on. They would attend church if they could find something there to make them happier and better fit to fight the battles of the day. *The simple, honest fact is that millions of people have become disappointed and discouraged with the dry and uninteresting program of the average church.*

So I think both friends and foes have missed the mark. Our literature on church attendance has been

circling around the problem rather than going into it. The cause of empty pews strikes right into the centre of the purpose of the Gospel itself. What is the Gospel for? Why are we Christians? What is the Kingdom of God? What can we do for modern life?

Dr. Charles Stelzle, I think, leads us nearer to an understanding of the question in his discussion of the breakdown of popular evangelism. He says in *World's Work*:

"Today the world awaits a great evangelist who has a message that will meet the needs of the times—a preacher with the crusading spirit—who is consumed with zeal because, like John Knox, he wants to win a nation, and who, in case of failure to do so, would be willing to become anathema, blotted out.

"Picture the host of modern-day evangelists who are struggling to get 'jobs' in the cities and towns of America today. It would be unfair to include the handful of men who have not 'bowed the knee to Baal.' As for the remainder of the four hundred who are said to be in the field of professional evangelism in this country, most of them have no vision of the real needs of today, no great passion that causes them to agonize in the small hours of the night. They are preaching sermons that were made twenty or more years ago, using phrases which have become threadbare and meaningless.

"The passing of the old evangelism is due not only to the failure of the older methods of work, but also to the inadequacy of the message being preached. For his day and generation Moody was undoubtedly broad-gauged and, what is more important perhaps, deeply sympathetic with reference to the social conditions of the people. The very practical work that he conducted during his entire career, looking toward the alleviation of suffering humanity, indicates this. The average evangelist of today, however, has

no sympathy whatever with social problems. He takes every opportunity to excoriate the social worker and particularly the churchman, who is interested in the social welfare of the community. This attitude is usually due to the gross ignorance of the facts—this is, perhaps, the most charitable thing to say, because it seems inconceivable that a preacher could assume the attitude toward the hardships and sufferings of the poor, based so largely upon the unjust economic conditions from which they arise, were he familiar with the facts.

“Not only do evangelists fail to consider the social needs of the people, but they almost altogether ignore their intellectual needs. Assuming that the basis of their teaching is fundamentally correct, often the presentation of these truths sounds like so much drivel, which intelligent people not only refuse to accept, but which drives them away from the Church and real religion.”

People have more leisure than ever, they will take time to go where they find light and life and help to solve their everyday problems. They will crowd to the doors any church that interprets the vital message of Jesus *fearlessly*. Folks do want a better world. They know that city politics often is full of graft and corruption. They like to see the political machine challenged. Individually they cannot do it, but they like to see the Church fearlessly denounce evil in the community. The multitude will always cheer the side of righteousness. The Church that knows the facts and presents those facts in the light of the Gospel of Christ in a personal and direct manner will have a following. That kind of a church will have only standing room. Religion is the most popular subject today. The International Radio Corporation reports that except for music, religion is the most popular subject.

The heart is hungry for religion. Humanity is seeking for deeper satisfactions than picture-show happiness. This is a great age for practical preaching that will illuminate the dark places of the earth.

Dr. Emerson Fosdick goes to the centre of this problem when he says:

“Any preacher who even with moderate skill is helping folks to solve their real problems is functioning. He never will lack an audience. He may have neither eloquence nor learning, but he is doing the one thing that is a preacher’s business.

“Many preachers indulge habitually in what they call expository sermons. They take a passage from Scripture and, proceeding on the assumption that the people attending church that morning are deeply concerned about what the passage means, they spend their time in a historical exposition, ending with some appended practical application to the auditors. Could any procedure be more surely predestined to dullness and futility? Every agency dealing with the public recognizes that contact with the actual life of the auditor is the one place to begin if his interest is desired. Only the preacher proceeds still upon the idea that folk come to church desperately anxious to discover what happened to the Jebusites!”

A man who never joined the church confessed to the loss in his life and said that had he his life to live over again he would do otherwise. But must not the Church take part of the blame for some great souls who never affiliated? This man goes on to say: “I was eager to affiliate with a band of fearless and adventurous souls who would dare to undertake the experiment of loving one’s enemies. I was eager for a fine and generous company dedicated to the idea of human brotherhood. But here I am without the

pale, secretly sorrowing and hungering for companionship and leadership in a great adventure that will earnestly seek the higher values regardless of immediate self-interest."

Henry M. Kerst, who sees the real purpose of the Church with great clearness, says in the *Reformed Church Pulpit*:

"Christianity, the genuine article, the Christianity that bears the superscription of God, must manifest a vast and vehement and withering intolerance to all evil. No charity in the world of mathematics can put up with the man who insists that two and two make five. To tolerate wild thinking in railroading or in bridge building or in navigation would be criminal. Everywhere there are pressing social and moral problems and, if Christianity is going to make any contribution of importance to their solution, it must walk in the ways of the old heroisms. If Christianity is not a challenge, an indictment, a sensation, it is a fraud. If it does smite sin and rebuke error and denounce oppression and hurl arrows of fire into all painted hypocrisies and all lying shams, it belies its origin and shames its author and makes itself contemptible in the eyes of the world. The Church will fill up, when there is a crusade on to conquer and Christianize the pagan areas in life."

With equal clarity and spiritual fervour G. A. Studdert Kennedy comes out for a crusading Church for the rights of the people:

"If the Church is to be a Church, indeed, and not a mere farce—and a peculiarly pernicious farce, a game of sentimental make-believe—she must be filled to overflowing with the fire of ancient prophets for social righteousness, with the wrath and love of the Christ. Her very existence is bound up with, and dependent upon an effort which does

not count the cost in any terms of pain, to Christianize the social order under which we live. If I had the tongue of men and of angels, I would use it to plead with the Christian Church, and more especially with those sections of it which profess and call themselves Catholic, to face the meaning and hope of their calling, and get to grips, as our Lord from the very beginning got to grips, with the problem of bread. Unless they do that, no unbroken Apostolic Succession can make their sacraments valid, and no wealth of gorgeous ritual can save their souls alive; for sacrament and ritual alike are mockery, unless they mean the consecration of all things in heaven and earth to the service of the everlasting God."

Protestantism, like democracy, is a movement for humanity. It lives only when great truths are propounded, when fine vision and idealisms are blazing in the sky. An organization like the Catholic Church might live long after the spirit is gone. The Protestant Church without the fire of a crusade collapses like a balloon without gas. It becomes a shot cartridge, a burned-out forest. It can live only on life. As Dr. W. P. Merrill suggests, "Catholicism is a track, but Protestantism is a trek." The evangelical Church is not set up to hold the fort, or mark time or to wait for the tick of the century. Are our pews empty? It is because we are not heralding a new heaven and a new earth to the masses. It is because we are not marching forward. We die when we are "at ease in Zion."

XIII

REALISM IN THE PULPIT

THE modern preacher-prophet must know current literature, the good and the bad. And equally important is it to know how to use the literary language in vogue. Too often the pulpit speaks in the language of yesterday.

Unquestionably the tendency is to realism in literature. Realism dominates books, magazines, feature stories, moving pictures, and "town topics."

Realism has been condemned as vulgar, a passing fad, the language of the street, and a plaything of the intelligensia. We have done everything except to use it and understand it.

Protopopoff, minister of the interior under the Russian Czar, said, when in prison after the first revolution, "I am guilty of the supreme sin of not understanding my own generation."

But to set oneself to understanding the literary tendencies of our generation is a large order. The very volume of literature is so mountainous that one becomes timid and lost in it. The tendencies are so confusing. There is so much good, so much bad, so much of the traditional and the impotent and dull, yet so much that is vital and living, that one hesitates to speak. It would be easy to take sides for or against modern naturalistic realism. But to understand the literature of our age, which seems so

different, so temporal, often so crudely obscene, is another matter.

Bob Davis, editor of *Munsey's*, said to me one day that three words characterized our day: Publicity, Duplicity, Commotion.

Literature in a measure is life. But our life has changed. It would be strange if our literature had not also changed. Our literary style had to change. The style of the classical period of American literature was inadequate for the bigness, the swiftness and the "commotion" of our generation. The style of the classics could not express the life of our pulsing, powerized age.

Then there was need for something more indigenous to our soil. Lowell and Longfellow were English in their leanings. We are not merely another chapter of the English. We are a brand new publication. We have a life as different from the English as it is different from the German and the Italian.

Then we could not expect the prudery of the Victorian day to continue. Freedom and democracy has spread beyond political spheres. We began to demand a larger literary liberty. We have walked all over the sacred rules of correct expression.

I am inclined to be much in sympathy with the style of modern realists. There is a breezy freshness, an interesting rawness and a stinging abruptness in it all which arouses me. Over the classics I plod and stumble, but the realists rush me along to "dizzy depths." Frost and Lee Masters and Carl Sandborg in poetry have blazed a new literary trail. I cannot see how Victorian poetry can affect our age of commotion. It will not be read, much less understood. Sherwood Anderson, for example, must be given credit for writing

real American fiction, something new in literature, and in the same way we must speak in appreciation of Stewart Sherman and Robert Herrick.

Just what has come over us in literature? What does the best school of realism stand for? What is the claim and demand of the critics?

Realism demands freedom for art. Writers must have freedom to write about anything that exists. "Today love rides down main street in chummy roadsters and is neither blind nor tongue-tied." Each year conversation is more and more outspoken. Therefore, they tell us, literature to be real must become more and more outspoken. Is our speech obscene? Then our novels cannot be pure. That would not be reality.

They argue that a writer must have an audience. Unread novels are worse than empty pews. The novelist will starve, while the preacher may go on and live for years with empty pews. Perhaps we should have pointed out in the last chapter that this is the real tragedy of the empty pew. Preachers do not have to fill the pews to live. Writers must have readers. So realism is an attempt to hold the readers. To be held, they must be shocked. Dirt and more dirt must be dished up to the readers who are getting ever more immune to shock. Crudity, obscenity, perversity, and nasty detail come in ever stronger doses to try to hold a jaded audience of readers. To justify this procedure an appeal is made again to art. Art has no responsibility to morality. A book is a good book when it has value from a literary point of view, regardless of morality or truth.

It is very difficult to remain balanced and fair to all in making an interpretive analysis of modern realism. It is so hard to distinguish in one's own mind between

prejudice and fact. Yet I feel the time is ripe for a fearless and Christian appraisal of the tendencies of the latest literature? How can we preach to the multitude unless we know what is being read? Is literature Godless and obscene, then we must set the pulpit message to work to correct it and make it worthy of our great age.

Heywood Broun says that our literature is photographic. He means that we see the surface of life only and a tiresome multitude of detail. I am reading *Manhattan Transfer*, yes, it is photographic, it is microscopic. It is a buzz and blurr of things, *things*. No selection, no bold lines and strokes, no great outlines. Broun points out that when the bird of Noah's ark came back it had just *one* single leaf. That was all that was necessary. Noah got the idea. Literary artists might take a lesson from this bird.

A lesson might also be learned from our big department store windows. We used to show everything we had in the store out in the show window. Now the best windows show one or two articles, or at most a small selection of articles. Our realists put every article they have in the show window. It makes me tired, confused.

Personally, my strongest objection to the literature of our best sellers is the eclipse of faith and the rambling, inadequate philosophy of life.

In *David Copperfield*, and in *The Scarlet Letter*, and in the strong books of the old masters there was always clear moral judgment. Right was right, and wrong was wrong. Moral principles dominated the actions of all characters. Sin was sin. It was guilt. It was punished. Suffering came, because of sin and violation of moral law. Conscience smote the sinner.

I agree with Edward Moore that the average modern novelist only plays with ideas. He is a mental coquette. He carries on an intellectual flirtation. He is not a Christian. He is not a pagan. He is not responsible for his ideas. He will not sacrifice for anything. He lacks conviction. He lacks confidence in civilization. "He is ground-hugging." Therefore, the literature of gloom and the "joyless prying into mud."

The general attitude of mind of the average writer is, "Oh, what's the use?" If any philosophy dominates him it is a loose psychological necessity or a "pseudo-scientific fatalism."

The most popular criticism, however, of modern realism is that of obscenity and indecency. Many of the realists have become "scandalmongers about the body and soul of man." They have completely fallen for the over-emphasis of sex as a motive in life. They have completely swallowed the confused twaddle of the materialistic psycho-analysts. So many books and magazines are sex-obsessed.

Edwin Markam says:

"Even a brief inspection of this fiction shows it to be filthy, current of sex-obsession, tainted with dregs of sex-perversion—a current that spreads pestilence wherever its putrid waters flow. What these new writers call 'love' is the brute attraction of the herd or the easy promiscuity of the harem. All that religion and the higher poetry have laboured for since the caveman is by them obliterated. The interest they show in sex is largely pathological; they see it chiefly in its diseased and erotic manifestations, never as the sacred mystery of existence."

Henrick Van Loon says:

"I shall have my say if the world were as full of indiffer-

ent editors as New York is full of taxis. And for lack of convenient church door, I shall hammer my theses to the hospitable wall of *The Commonweal* and I shall proclaim here and now, and as loudly as I can, that our country is being overrun with and by a putrid stream of the most despicable, and the most iniquitous, and on the whole the most dangerous form of a degraded variety of literature; that this stuff is being publicly sold and publicly sent through the mails; and that so far no authority, public or otherwise, seems to be willing or able to stop the dissemination of this literary garbage."

There are signs of reaction against literary filth. Some critics like Stewart Sherman are pointing out that art is a matter of choosing the best. Art should bring out the eternal. Elaboration of detail spoils art. Appolo is great because of its suggestion of eternity in humanity. Realism fails in the eternal.

In the main I reject the *message* of realism. It is not representative of our people. It is not worthy of a great Christian age. But I do like the *method* of realism. I like the style of the new writers. I like the freedom of it, the dash and abruptness of it. It fits our speed. Life is too interesting to linger over rounded sentences and involved phraseology. Not many will now puzzle over the obscure sentences of Browning. Most of the classics are dead to aeroplane Americans.

And the classical form of preaching is equally dead. Many a fine message has been lost to the world because the preacher knew only a dead language. Realism in the pulpit would wake up many a drowsy congregation. If I understand the language of Jesus, it was the realism of His day. He not only rejected the thought-forms of the religionists, He rejected their language.

He spoke the language of the field, the farm, the sky, and the market-place. The common people understood Him, they heard Him gladly. The multitudes followed Him.

Fearlessness in pulpit utterance will drive us to a kind of realism. A knowledge of modern life makes it easier to speak as the people think. The politics of the day run hard in the phraseology of scholasticism. A preacher alive to the world will be grateful for the freedom of realism.

And what a chance to be alive and real and fresh in the pulpit! What a chance to speak about terribly real sin. Sin as it spoils and blackens character. What a chance to be graphic on social and political evil. The orator has ten times the chance to use realism. The writer is more or less fettered. The preacher can take the startling, bristling facts of today and the prophecies of our greater tomorrow and use them for the Gospel in the most realistic way.

Let Christian ministers take up the fresh methods of realism and show the world that the murders and disorders of today are not due to taboos or social conventions or suppressions, but to the nullification of the laws of God and man. The removal of restraints and beliefs, the liberation of the spirit of man without a corresponding self-mastery, the breakdown of the hold of religion are at the root of the crimes of our people. Someone has well said that a day like this which needed a Socrates only got a Menchen. In a sense this is a voiceless age. Literature does not represent us. Realism is not true. One who knows America wonders from where the novelists got their material. The real rootings of life are avoided. Materialism which can only be the scaffolding of life has taken up all the at-

tention of literary artists. They tell about radios, cars, and card parties, but they leave out the inner soul of man. The struggling, the tormenting, the achieving, loving, worshipping modern man no novelist today interprets.

What a day for realists in the pulpit! A realist of the spirit. A realist for God.

XIV

A PROGRAM FOR FEARLESS PROPHETS

"The evident conclusions of such people seem to be that the Church has no right to engage in politics. Individual persuasion, not legislation, should be the method employed to advance God's kingdom. The Church should confine its attention to the future life and not meddle in mundane matters. Such a view is of very doubtful validity. Life cannot be rigidly categorized. Business, religion, club life, politics, are not so many distinct entities. They are parts of a full social personality. The business man does not lay aside his economic philosophy when he considers a political problem. Churchmen do not divest themselves of their religion when they turn to vote.

"To say that the members of business organizations or religious groups shall not take an active part in politics is to say that they shall have no voice in the determination of the legal arrangements governing their own lives. It is not a sufficient answer to say that their influence should be individual and not corporate. Corporate activity is the rule of the day. Without organization, in the modern state, the individual is lost and his influence is negligible. . . . Representative Government is not adequately pictured when viewed as the mere selection of a number of political servants. It embraces also the representatives of voluntary associations who advise, coerce, or cajole those servants. To deny to the churchers representation in this latter sense is not only to defeat real representative Government but to deny our public servants the counsel of an important body of public opinion."— Pressure Politics, PETER H. ODEGARD.*

DESIGNING politicians are now calling anxiously for the "simple Gospel." Secular minded statesmen are insisting upon the supremacy of the State in

* *Zion's Herald.*

all matters pertaining to this world. The general unthinking multitude have a half-religious faith in the separation of Church and State. The preachers and Church boards are hesitating. In some quarters we hear prophetic and fearless messages. The sins of the world are valiantly challenged. More churches have the anæmia. There seems to be no great concern for this earth nor any clear-cut faith in heaven. There is little special knowledge of politics. No great passion for social righteousness.

In this study we have tried to understand the meaning of the prophetic movement of the Old Testament. We found that the prophets were the great preachers of history. And they were preachers to the nation. They made the governments tremble before their denunciations. Had they been merely personal moralists, we would never have heard of them. It was the statesmanship sermons that made Isaiah the tower of strength.

Then we tried to find the real meaning of the Gospel of Jesus. We became convinced that Jesus preached to the "lost house of Israel," that He had the political situation in mind, that He wanted to save the people from the impending destruction of the nation. This Gospel for His people for His day was so true and so universal that it became the Gospel for all times, for men and nations. The Gospel of Jesus was anything but the "simple Gospel" now demanded by folks who know little about religion. Jesus died for preaching a Gospel which offended both Roman imperialism and Jewish nationalism.

Then we took a brief look at the politics of the Christian ages. We saw how the Church co-operated with the nation to civilize the barbarians. The Church

furnished culture, brains and righteousness for statesmanship. No one at that time even dreamed of keeping the Church in a water-tight spiritual department. The influence of the Church during the Christian ages was felt intimately even in the organization of the government. This was particularly so with nationalism, which so profoundly changed modern politics.

More to the point for us is the religious origin of our own nation. No nation ever had a more religious beginning. We found that even the very form of our democracy was inspired by Biblical democracy. The colonial preachers were the instructors in free government. The very theology they preached gave the background for a covenant government, or a government by constitution. The religious teaching that God governs by law, together with preaching the sacredness of personality determined our great democracy. The Revolutionary War became a great religious crusade. The preachers instigated the colonists to dash for freedom. The literature of Revolutionary days has hardly an apology for their interest in politics. It was taken for granted.

We have also noticed how the great revival movements and the progress of free evangelical religion ministered to the stabilizing of democracy after the Revolutionary War. The growing American Republic was nursed in free democracy by the free expression of religion. This democracy in religion resulted in a riot of sects and in a costly disunity in religion, but it was worth the cost in establishing forever the instinct for free thinking and free living. Every community had an opportunity to practice religious democracy in the organizing of new churches. It was surely God's way of training a great people for freedom.

Then a study of later democracy in America and of the world disclosed to us that free government is being challenged by political philosophers. It is feared by them that democracy is levelling, and to save the race we need to be ruled by the best. It is assumed that democracy does not elevate the best, but encourages the mediocre. Democracy is in danger. Nation after nation is repudiating equality and liberty. The philosophy of aristocracy is again rising to popularity. This has all been brought on by corruption and inefficiency in democracy. Any government controlled by office-seeking politicians sooner or later becomes corrupt. Democracy can only be sustained by a great people motivated by religious principles. We now need ten thousand talented prophet-preachers who will turn their attention to the fundamentals of government. The corruption at the heart of our nation will kill confidence in government by the people unless checked. No wonder then that there are those who fear the searching eye of the prophet. No wonder there are those who want to keep religion within narrow bounds.

We also saw how liberalism dragged out laissez-faire and states' rights theories to resist the enforcement of prohibition. It is argued that we must have less and less of government control. This theory comes to us now, when we have need of more and more government control. All this only goes to emphasize again the fact that we need more political education for the people. *We need drilling in the fundamentals of theology and politics.*

But it is easy to tell the preachers of today to do as the great preachers of history did in laying the foundations of Christian civilization. It would be more

important, if he could give particular and special help on a program for today. What should we preach about now? What wrongs must be righted by the Gospel?

The books of advice to preachers of the last couple of years counsel diplomacy. "You serve all people, try to be at harmony with everybody." "You catch more flies with sugar than with vinegar." "Remember you have no part in party politics." "The minister's relation to civic and national affairs is a vexed question." "How large a part should the minister take in local and national affairs?" "Be sure that you understand all about a political question before you speak." "Of course, when morals are at stake, you must speak."

Ringling challenges to men of God to be fearless preachers of right, whatever the consequences, are strangely lacking. And again let me say that I believe that this is why we have empty pews. That is why the influence of the Church in political affairs is negligible. And, not strange to say, when the Church fails to come to grips with the practical world, then the Church also loses clearness of spiritual vision and becomes dull and inefficient in her efforts for personal salvation.

The nature of our Gospel, the peculiar needs of democracy, and the separation of Church and State prompts me to insist that no one be allowed to limit the message of the Church or to judge of the propriety of the preacher discussing any field of activity. Any limitation upon the freedom of the Church is dangerous. Any time when anything vital for humanity had to be championed somebody could then muzzle the preacher and silence the message. A free nation must keep a free pulpit. Free speech in politics is not safe without free speech in religion. Only the Church can

be the judge of its pronouncements. Let the Church be free to sink or swim on its own merits. Do you say that that is dangerous and perilous? Yes, and so is life perilous. Democracy itself is a great venture. Yet the freedom of organized religion must be maintained at all costs.

Charles Steltzle has pointed out that the Church must interpret the religion of our new democracy and that this means an interpretation of life in all its aspects. All political problems are fundamentally moral and religious. There never was a strike, an epidemic, a war, a social or economic situation that did not have shot through it moral principle. It is the business of the preacher to find the moral principle and apply it fearlessly in public preaching.

The Conference on Christian Politics, Economics, and Citizenship, held at Birmingham, England, in 1924, made a careful study of this whole question. The Conference said:

"To go out and teach all nations has a double task. Alongside the work of individual conversion, effort must be made to Christianize the corporate life of mankind. Recent developments since the industrial revolution, vast increase in population, growth of cities and mass production, specialization and consequent interdependence of individuals, have given new significance to the truth that we are members of one another. The existence of a system and of methods unsatisfying, if not antagonistic to Christian life, constitutes a challenge to the Church. We cannot Christianize life in compartments. To reform industry involves the reform of education, of home life, of politics and international life."

No one wants the domination of Church over State. Augustine's *Civitas Dei* is out of date. It is free co-operation of Church and State for Christian civil-

ization that we now need. The primary business of the Church will always be the inspiration of men and women to take a Christian part in the world. But that is not enough. The Church must see that God is not forgotten in industrial and political relations of men. Corporations must be converted. No field of collective action must ever be allowed to be excluded from the rule of Christian principles. In other words, the Church must lead a crusade to make the world fit to live in. "The Church must never cease while there is poor housing, sweat-shops, tenements, unjust wages, industrial inequity, the butchery of war, and the many social evils that ruin souls."

The vital concern of the Roman Catholic Church for the spirituality of government is well expressed by Count Giuseppe Della Tarre. He says that, according to Catholic logic, the Church, which is the custodian of religion, which interprets, teaches and applies religious principles cannot ignore politics nor can politics repudiate the guidance and the advice of the Church. The Pope, in receiving the students from Polermo Convention in 1924, said, "The Azione Catholica, while not partaking in politics as such, intends to teach Catholics the best way of making use of politics. Those who want to do good in politics cannot escape the duty of suitable preparation."

It is further pointed out by this Catholic authority that government must exist for the welfare of its citizenship. When appetite and pleasure interfere with the highest welfare and health of its people, then it becomes the duty of the government to interfere with these pleasures. But no government is strong enough to do this unaided. The government has a right to expect the Church to assist by supplying conviction

and moral enthusiasm for this better living. In fact, the Church must go farther than this. The Church must inspire and encourage the government to this higher idealism. Religion unites the interests of man's life. It is a sustained habit of thinking of life in the light of ultimate issues. It brings order and perspective into our conception of life. It throws upon the world the quiet light of a larger day.

It seems that a certain type of politicians are certain that churches become spiritually powerless when they consider civic affairs at all. Some of our high-power newspapers seem to fall in with this same idea. One of the representatives at Washington made a severe attack on certain statements made by the Federal Council of Churches. *The Living Church* made a reply to this statesman as follows:

"We cannot stand aside and acquiesce in the assumption, conveyed by the resolutions presented, that it is presumptuous or unfitting that religious bodies, representing some cross section of the American conscience, should seek to influence national legislation in accordance with that conscience. They may do it well or they may do it badly. They may easily overdo it. But that they are to be censured for bringing conscience into national or international affairs—this is not to be tolerated. As an example, it may be said that the Christian conscience hates war with an intensity that a politician can scarcely understand. Political bodies have not found a way to prevent war. Religious bodies intend to prod them, until they do. Organized Christianity, in almost every phase, demanded, after the late War, that law be substituted for war; that the nations be brought together in a peace organization. If Christian people, or Christian churches, indignant at the refusal of their Government to co-operate with the world in estab-

lishing an international peace system, have illogically set themselves in antagonism to a legitimate and wise system of national preparedness, we are sorry, and we grant that they are wrong, but the Government and the men that refused every sort of urging to provide a substitute for war, and at the same time embittered certain other great nations by a policy of stupidly treading on their national sensibilities, must take the blame. Recent events may have shown our Government how inconvenient is a Christian conscience that will not remain silent."

I said in the beginning that the preacher had been bowed out of one area of life after the other, until there was not rooting enough in life for the Church to live. But I am not so concerned about the Church, if Christian civilization could live without it. I am, however, convinced that Christian civilization will collapse with the Church. We are now painfully witnessing the secularization of every area of life left by the Church. Abraham Epstein, in *Current History*, voices almost unconsciously the crying need for the Church to get back into the field of charity. This is one big area of life almost deserted by the Church. And the sources and inspiration for charity are drying up without revealed religion. He says:

"Social workers themselves concede that somehow the movement today has neither the zeal, the enthusiasm, nor the missionary spirit of its early pioneers. No longer are the voices of the early Isaiahs heard in the demand of justice. Vital social reforms are left to languish, and social workers as a group take but little interest in them. Except for campaign purposes, social work no longer proclaims itself as pure altruism. When it speaks, its voice is no longer that of scorching indictment, or deep-rooted convictions, or of emotional authority. It has lost its spiritual

equilibrium, and it has become too practical to be passionate. It speaks with the polished tongue of the financier through expert press agents and high-pressure publicity. Instead of denouncing wrongs, it has become merely amiable. Its only crusades are community chest drives, which it conducts with the zip-zip of a successful team's cheer leader.

"The modern social worker no longer appeals to the conscience of the community for the eradication of social evils. He has passed the stages of charity and preventive work. His preoccupation is with 'adjusting people to life.' He has acquired a 'technique,' and his highest aim is to do a good case-work job; his ambition is to become recognized as a 'professional technician.' His prescriptions are no longer compounds of social panaceas and far-visioned dreams, but of all the new discoveries of psychology, psychiatry, and the 'science' of case-work. The questions of a living wage, abolition of the slums, women and child labour, no longer attract him. His new faith proclaims the inequality of human beings, and he believes that to get socially helpful results, we have to do different things for different people."

I can almost hear the same plaintive undertone of discouragement in the labour world. To work for a square deal for men on a materialistic basis has become a dead drag. Human beings are "prejudiced, ignorant, have unchecked vanities, untutored and misguided instincts, and irrational traditions." The Gospel is needed in the labour world. The Church must lead in the regeneration of men and make them sufficient for the strains of the day.

A great industrial leader is reported to have said that he fears most of all the great multitude going to work in the morning without creative joy in their faces. The factory system is barren monotony for millions of

men and women. It deadens imagination and robs them of creative joy. What a field is this for religion! What a challenge for the preacher to proclaim fundamental brotherhood and the need of democracy in industry. It is, of course, a far more difficult challenge than that which faced the colonial preachers. Political democracy is a small matter to the man who has not one thing to say about his own employment, wages, sanitation, or hours of work. What a chance now, when labour and capital are hesitating to blaze in the sky of industry higher than the belching smokestacks that production is social service, organized service, and not business selfishness! What a chance to say that property must be held in trust for God and humanity. Brotherhood and justice must become effective before any nation is really Christian.

There is much complaint in religious circles that we lack the sense of sin today. This is true. There is a very blurred sense of standard, theological sin, but is not this due to our limitation on the definition of sin? Only certain kinds of sin can the muzzled preacher denounce. The sense of real sin, the sin that spoils personality and ruins society is perhaps as real as ever. It is known, it is loved, and hated, and indulged in and despaired of. I said in another chapter, what a chance for a realist on sin.

A keen observer of world politics has said that to cure Europe of its present miseries by mere information and intellectual education is like trying to cure a man suffering from peritonitis by giving him a new pair of pajamas. The only hope is something that goes deeper. The primitive passions must be overcome by a passion for God. Europe is weary, war-sick, and disillusioned.

The Peace Treaty sowed seeds for a great crop of wars. We have the same old hatreds and the same old national feelings, only accentuated by changed boundary lines. The nations are now, "herds of animals with armies and navies as their teeth and claws." Economic pressure and population pressure will cause the unbearable nationalism to blow off into another war. Can the preacher of the Gospel for the salvation of the whole world know all this and say nothing about it? Do not conditions like we have today demand that the Church become interested in international politics? Is not individual salvation almost a hollow mockery when we are unmindful of international chaos?

W. T. Davidson says, "It is almost universally recognized that religion in the future must be broader, richer, and more comprehensive, if it is to command the allegiance of coming generations. It must be wide as life itself, taking as its province truth, beauty, and goodness of all types, in all their manifestations. If religion is to sway all aspects of life, social, political, economical, national and international, as surely it ought, its message and guidance must be as wide and varied as its claims."

Bowing the preacher out of politics is Satan's new method of stultifying Christianity. The plan is to leave Christianity a pretty, harmless little thing, left there high and dry, the tides of life having gone out. The Church is to be for heaven and politics for the earth. This means an empty heaven and a ruined civilization. To silence the Protestant ministers of America is to snuff out democracy.

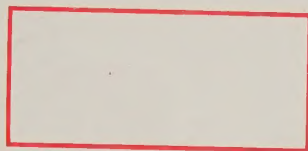
Therefore, I call for free speech for the preachers in every realm of life. Every important department of life is moral or it is nothing. I call upon Church

boards to give encouragement to prophetic liberty. Then a new era of Christian evangelization of the world will be at hand. The Kingdom of God will come.

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